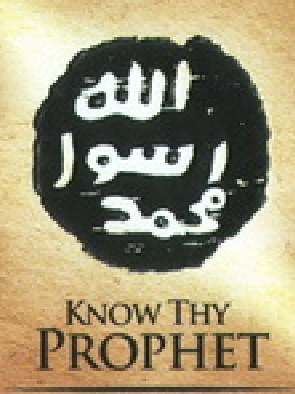
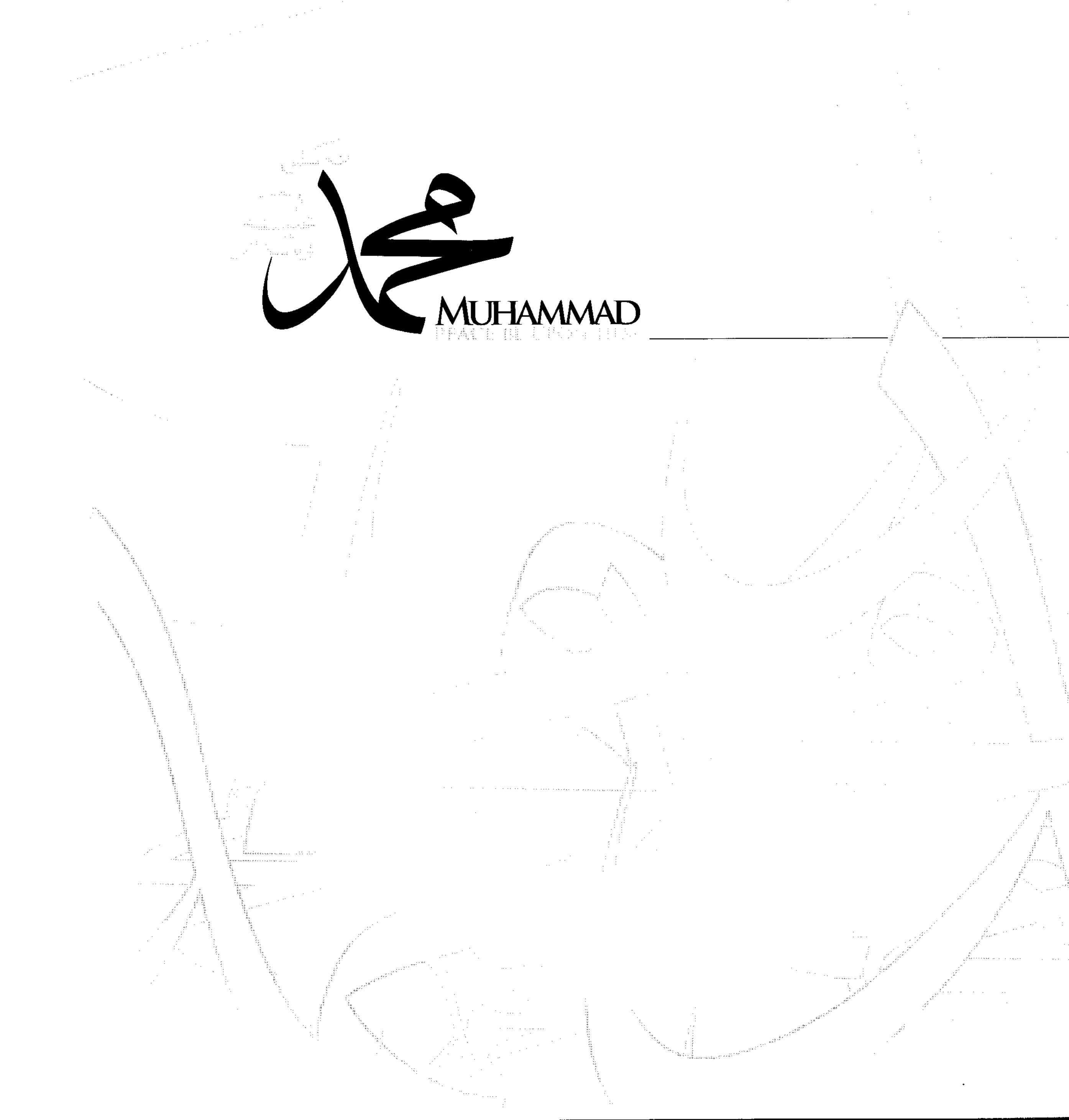


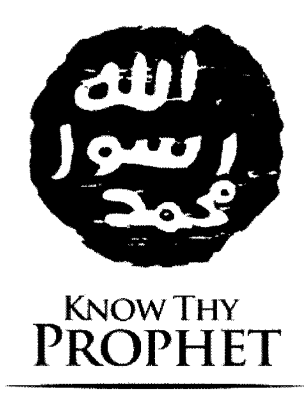
KNOW THY PROPHET

MAY PEACE AND BLESSINGS OF ALLAAH BE UPON HIM

JUMUAH


MUHAMMAD





MAY PEACE AND BLESSINGS OF ALLAAH BE UPON HIM

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword

Imagine this: You are at work, in the shops, on a bus. You overhear strangers maligning someone you don't know. What do you do? Nothing?

Or this: You are at work, in the shops, on a bus. You overhear strangers maligning someone you cherish; your mother, your father, your husband, your wife. What do you do? Defend them? Set the record straight and demand an apology, even at the risk of causing a scene?

Why is that? Because, we want 'respect'? Because right or wrong, no-one talks that way about our family? Or is it because we know what was said is untrue; and the truth about them is what causes us to love them and risk anything to defend them?

Or how about this: You are at work, in the shops, on a bus. You overhear strangers maligning the Prophet Muhammad, sallallaahu alayhe wa sallam[3]. What do you do?

Directly and indirectly, our Prophet (ﷺ) is maligned everyday; at work, in the shops, as well as on the bus. He is maligned by the media, by politicians, by strangers, by family even; but how do we react when he is the target of these lies and distortions? Do we react angrily or simply keep quiet?

Sadly, we do both. We do so because he is a stranger to us. We claim to love him but our behavior belies our words. We have little or no idea who he was, what he stood for, what he taught, or how he reacted when the same things happened to him, so how can our love be true?

The first Muslims were attracted to Islaam because they were attracted to the Prophet of Islaam (ﷺ). They grew up with him, they knew everything about him, and because they knew him, they loved him, gave up everything for him, and modeled their lives on his.

[3] *Transliteration for (ﷺ), which means: May Allaah exalt his mention. Alternate translation is: Peace be upon him*

If we claim to love the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), then we ought to know him too. Perhaps, once we come to know him better, we will love him more than our mothers and fathers, our husbands and wives. Perhaps we will love him more than ourselves – and if we do, then we will truly believe.

And that, dear brothers and sisters, is what this book is all about.

It's a book about Muhammad, the Prophet of Islaam (ﷺ). It's about his character, morals, compassion, forbearance, patience, love… It's to help us to know him, and to love him.

First comes knowledge, and then comes love.

INTRODUCTION

The theme running through this book is that it is only through knowledge of the Prophet (ﷺ) that we can love him. And only when armed with knowledge and love, will we be able to tell others the truth about the Prophet of Islaam (ﷺ). This book is an adaptation of articles previously published in Al Jumuah magazine and, for the two before last, in I-MAG magazine.

We start with Yusuf Estes asking a very simple question: who is the Prophet of Islaam (ﷺ)? He answers his question with an 'A-Z' of what those who knew him had to say about him, and what those who have come to know him have to say about him.

The theme is picked up by Jennifer Moore who gives us a brief history of the Prophet (ﷺ). She tells us of his early childhood; the terror of the first revelation; the trials, challenges, and persecution he faced in calling others to worship Allaah; and his establishment of a society based on justice.

Salah As-Sawi follows this with what he calls 'A Bill of Rights for All Times': the Prophet's Farewell Sermon. He tells us that the sermon is a code of conduct for the Muslim nation, and uses it to give us a glimpse of the personality of this great and humane leader, who exuded humility, genuine care and kindness at all times.

We all have rights, rights conferred upon us by Allaah and His Prophet (ﷺ) is no exception. Umm AbdurRahman Hirschfelder outlines the Prophet's rights and explains the correct way of giving him his rights, but warns us of the dangers of exaggerating them.

Jasim Al-Mutawwa returns to the biography of the Prophet (ﷺ) and through detailed information covering most aspects of his life, urges us to check and verify our belief in him. He tells us that knowing our Prophet (ﷺ) is the key to love, and to revitalizing our faith.

The remainder of the book has a more contemporary focus. Ibrahim Babelli asked himself whom he would take a bullet for, and realized that the concept explains why Muslims react as they do when the Prophet of Islaam (ﷺ) is insulted or belittled.

In Beyond Boycott, Hayat Alyaqout turns the tables on us. She asks whether the reason people insult the Prophet (ﷺ) is simply because they think that our behavior as his followers reflects his personality and teachings. She encourages us to learn about him, to love him, to emulate him, and to tell others about him.

In the final part of the book, Ekram Haque emphasizes that loving the Prophet (ﷺ) means following him. He compares the way the Prophet (ﷺ) reacted to setbacks and persecution, to the way we react to insults against the Prophet (ﷺ), and wonders if hidden blessings might become apparent if we changed our behavior, and tried to practice what the Prophet (ﷺ) taught.

May Allaah open our minds and our hearts so that we may know him (ﷺ) and truly love him (ﷺ).

Timeline

Year	Event
569 C.E.[4]	Death of his father
570 C.E.	Muhammad (ﷺ) was born.
576 C.E.	Death of his mother
578 C.E.	Death of his paternal grandfather and guardian
582 C.E.	First trip with Abu Taalib (his uncle and guardian) in a trade caravan
584 C.E.	First military experience in the war of Fijaar[5]
588 C.E.	First political experience in forming the alliance of the Fudhool[6]
590 C.E.	First business undertaking as the head of Khadeejah's trade caravan
595 C.E.	Marriage to Khadeejah
599 C.E.	Al-Qaassem and Abdullah were born and died between 595 and 599 C.E.
600 C.E.	Birth of Zaynab followed by Ruqayyah, Um Kulthoom and Faatimah
605 C.E.	Rebuilding of Al-Ka'abah[7] and restoration of Al-Hajar Al-Aswad[8] to its place
610 C.E.	Divine Revelation and the dawn of Islaam
613 C.E.	Universality of Islaam mandated by Allaah
615 C.E.	First group of Muslim refugees left Makkah for Abyssinia
617 C.E.	Siege of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers and total boycott
620 C.E.	End of siege and boycott
620 C.E.	Death of both Khadeejah and Abu Taalib
620 C.E.	Visit to Taif to call its people to Islaam
621 C.E.	The night journey to Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem and the ascension to the heavens. The five daily prayers were mandated during this night journey
623 C.E.	Migration to Madinah[9]

[4] Common Era or Christian Era, in preference to A.D. (Anno Domini) meaning the year of the Lord.

[5] An Arabic word referring to desecration of the sacred months during which no war should be waged.

[6] Fudhool is the plural of Fadhl, which was the first name of all five leaders that entered into this noble alliance.

[7] The centerpiece of the Holy Mosque in Makkah.

[8] Transliteration of the Arabic words for 'Black Stone'.

[9] Madinah means city, but with the definite article "Al-Madinah", the word is synonymous with "The City of the Prophet"

Start of the Hijri[10] calendar

Year		Event
1 Hijri	623 C.E.	Migration to Madinah
2 Hijri	624 C.E.	Change of Qiblah[11] from Al-Aqsa[12] to Al-Ka'abah
2 Hijri	624 C.E.	Mandating Siyaam[13]
2 Hijri	624 C.E.	Battle of Badr[14]
2 Hijri	624 C.E.	Mandating Zakaah[15]
3 Hijri	625 C.E.	Battle of Uhud[16]
5 Hijri	627 C.E.	Battle of Al-Khandaq[17]
5 Hijri	627 C.E.	Mandating Hajj
6 Hijri	628 C.E.	Signing of the treaty of Al-Hudaybiyah[18]
7 Hijri	629 C.E.	Correspondences with kings and sovereigns
7 Hijri	629 C.E.	Final battle with the Jewish inhabitants of Arabia in Khaybar
7 Hijri	629 C.E.	Return of Muslim refugees in Abyssinia
8 Hijri	630 C.E.	First battle between Muslims and the Roman Empire at Mu'tah
8 Hijri	630 C.E.	Liberation of Makkah
8 Hijri	630 C.E.	Battles of Hunayn and Taif
9 Hijri	631 C.E.	Second encounter between Muslims and the Roman Empire at Tabouk
9 Hijri	631 C.E.	First Hajj after Makkah liberation
10 Hijri	632 C.E.	Farewell Hajj
11 Hijri	633 C.E.	Death of the Prophet (ﷺ)

[10] Hijri is the adjective of Hijrah, which means 'migration'. It refers to the starting date of the Islaamic calendar.

[11] Direction Muslims assume upon performing the daily prayers.

[12] The grand mosque in Jerusalem.

[13] Fasting.

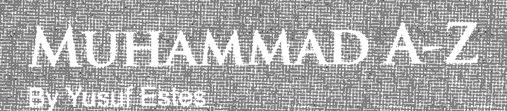
[14] The first major battle between Muslims and their Makkan persecutors.

[15] Mandatory alms.

[16] The second major battle between Muslims and their Makkan persecutors.

[17] The third major battle between Muslims and their Makkan persecutors.

[18] A location near Makkah where a truce was signed between the Prophet and the pagans of Makkah.



MUHAMMAD A-Z

By Yusuf Estes

Many people today are discussing Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

Who was he exactly? What did he teach? Why was he loved so much by some and hated so much by others? Did he live up to his claims? Was he a holy man? Was he a prophet of God? What is the truth about this man?

Yusuf Estes tells us, in a simple pedagogic approach, who the Prophet of Islaam (ﷺ) was. And then, after having quoted several non-Muslim intellectuals and leaders, he asks "whether all these extraordinary, revolutionary and amazing statements, about this one man could really be true", and leaves us with this challenging question: "What if they are all true?"

Muhammad A-Z

Many people knew the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) personally; here are some of the things they narrated about him:

- He was born to a noble tribe, whose lineage included the leaders of Makkah.
- He never fell into the common practice of his tribesmen of worshipping statues, idols or man-made "gods."
- He believed that God was truly One God, and as such, only He was to be worshipped, without any other "gods" beside Him.
- He adhered to the Commandments of Allaah, in the same way as prophets of old.
- He forbade usury and interest on money lending, as did the Jews and Christians centuries before him.
- He never gambled and did not allow it.
- He never drank alcohol or strong drink; even though it was a very normal thing for people of his time and place.
- He did not engage in gossip and used to turn away from hearing it.
- He taught of the Immaculate Conception of Jesus and of his miracle birth to Mary, and taught that Mary was among the best of Allaah's creation.
- He commanded the payment of charity to the poor and he was the defender and protector of widows, orphans and wayfarers.
- He ordered people to unite with their families and honor the ties of kinship and he restored relationships between family members.
- He required his followers to engage only in lawful marriage relationships with women, and forbade sex outside of Allaah's Ordinance.

- He insisted on giving women their proper rights, dowries, inheritance and property.

- His patience and humble attitude were exemplary and all who knew him acknowledged his virtues.

- He was famous with all the tribes in Makkah for his impeccable manners.

- He was known as Al-Ameen[19] because he never lied, never broke a trust and never bore false witness.

[19] *Truthful and trustworthy.*

- He forbade killing unless the orders came from Allaah, and he clearly spelled out the limits. Even when waging war against those who raised arms against the Muslims and Islaam, combat was only fought according to very strict rules from Allaah.

- Slavery was common in those days in all nations. Islaam strongly encouraged people to free their slaves and promised those who did so great rewards from Allaah. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) set the example by freeing slaves and encouraging all of his followers to do the same.

- Curses and invocations of evil were directed at the Prophet (ﷺ) by his enemies, but he responded by praying for their guidance. A classic example of this is his journey to the town of Taif. The leaders of Taif refused to listen to him or to offer him the normal courtesy extended to visitors. Instead, they set the street children on him, who pelted him with stones until his body bled. He was offered revenge by the angel Gabriel, who said that he had but to give the command, and Allaah would cause the surrounding mountains to fall down upon them, destroying them all. But instead of cursing them or asking for their destruction, he prayed for them to be guided so that they would only worship their Lord, without any partners.

- Muhammad (ﷺ) taught his followers to believe in Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus, as true prophets, messengers and servants of Allaah.

[20] *Torah, Zaboor and Injeel are the Old Testament, Psalms, and Gospel, respectively.*

• He also taught that the Torah, Zaboor and Injeel[20] were originally from the very same source as the Qur'an - they were all from Allaah.

Much has been written about Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). He has been highly praised by famous non-Muslims for centuries. The Encyclopedia Britannica states that: ". . . a mass of detail in the early sources shows that he was an honest, upright man who had gained the respect and loyalty of others who were likewise honest and upright men." (Vol. 12)

Another impressive tribute to Muhammad (ﷺ) is from Michael H. Hart, who wrote "The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History." He states that the most influential person in all history was Muhammad (ﷺ). Examine his actual words: "My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels."

George Bernard Shaw, the famous writer said: "He must be called the Savior of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume leadership of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it much needed peace and happiness." (The Genuine Islam, Singapore, Vol. 1, No. 8, 1936)

Mahatma Gandhi, speaking on the character of Muhammad (ﷺ) said in 'YOUNG INDIA': "I wanted to know the best of one who holds today undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind... I became more than convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islaam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, and his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the 2nd volume (of the Prophet's biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of the great life."

Although Muhammad (ﷺ) was nothing more than a human being, he was a

man with a noble mission, which was to unite humanity on the worship of the One and Only God and to teach them the way to honest and upright living based on the commands of God. He always described himself as, 'A Servant and Messenger of God' and so indeed every action of his proclaimed to be.

In the words of the Dutch Orientalist Professor Hurgronje: "The league of nations founded by the Prophet of Islaam put the principle of international unity and human brotherhood on such universal foundations as to show candle to other nations." He continues, "The fact is that no nation of the world can show a parallel to what Islaam has done towards the realization of the idea of the League of Nations."

People do not hesitate to declare other individuals divine, even though their lives and missions have been lost in legend. Historically speaking, none of these legends achieved even a fraction of what Muhammad (ﷺ) accomplished. And all his striving was for the sole purpose of uniting mankind for the worship of the One God on the codes of moral excellence. Neither Muhammad (ﷺ) nor his followers, at any time claimed that he was a son of God or the God-incarnate or a man with divinity— on the contrary he is and was always considered to be just a man, but a man chosen by Allaah to be His Messenger.

Today, fourteen centuries later, the life and teachings of Muhammad (ﷺ) have survived without the slightest loss, alteration or interpolation. They offer the same undying hope for treating mankind's many ills that they did when he was alive. This is not a claim of Muhammad's followers, but the inescapable conclusion arrived at by a critical and unbiased history.

Now it is up to us – as rational thinkers and concerned human beings – to ask ourselves whether these extraordinary, revolutionary and amazing statements, all about this one man, could really be true.

What if they are all true?

A Brief History of the Prophet

By Jennifer Moore

The importance of telling people about Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is because he was sent to all people. Jennifer Moore introduces the Prophet (ﷺ) to the readers by offering a synopsis of his life as a Messenger.

Al-Ameen – a nickname given to him by the pagans of Makkah – was charged by Allaah the Almighty to "...deliver the universal message to all humankind." Moore tells us that his mission lasted 23 years, and it culminated in the complete transformation of the society of Madinah from a feuding nothingness into "... an advanced and just political, legal, economic and social system."

A Brief History of the Prophet

It all began in the year 610 C.E., with a few brave individuals differing in tribe, status, and gender, secretly winding through the alleys of Makkah to meet the man known as Al-Ameen. One by one they went, like stealthy shadows in the moonlight, hoping not to be noticed and reported to powerful city leaders. They were prepared to sacrifice everything – their cultures, families, even their own lives – for the sake of worshipping the One True God.

Al-Ameen had called them to cast aside the pagan religion of their forefathers, and to embrace pure monotheism. The 40-year-old man, whose name was Muhammad (ﷺ) claimed that God saw all people, men and women, free and enslaved, as equal: A message which would, in two short decades, bring peace to the war-torn Arabian Peninsula and beyond; a message forbidding tribal feudalism and corruption by any leader; a message that came to be known as "Islaam," calling for devotion and submission to God alone.

Muhammad's prophethood was similar to those of the Prophets before him, including Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and many others. An orphan by the age of seven, he grew up a simple, yet pious individual. He was known for his justice and honesty, earning the nickname Al-Ameen years before he was to learn of his own prophethood.

He despised the injustices he saw within Makkan society, and as a young man helped form an alliance, "Hilf[21] Al-Fudhool," to help preserve the rights of the poor and oppressed. He was troubled by the abundance of idols and senseless acts of paganism dominating his people. A staggering 360 idols were housed in Makkah, and they were called upon daily by most residents of the city. For someone of deep moral character, it must have been a confusing and difficult place to live. Muhammad used to go for days at a time into hills around Makkah to meditate.

[21] *Alliance or pact.*

It was during one of these times, in a cave in Mount Hiraa[22], that God sent His first revelation to Muhammad (ﷺ). Muhammad (ﷺ) was now the final Messenger of God, and would be entrusted with delivering the universal mes-

[22] *A mountain in Makkah nowadays but was outside Makkah at the time of the revelation.*

sage to all humankind. The Archangel Gabriel came to Muhammad (ﷺ) and commanded, “Read!” A terrified Muhammad (ﷺ) replied, “I am not a reader,” for he could neither read nor write, as literacy, where he lived, was rare. The angel took hold of him, hugged him with incredible force, released him and repeated the command: Read! Muhammad (ﷺ) repeated himself and once again the angel hugged him tightly until Muhammad (ﷺ) thought he could bear it no longer. After the third time, Muhammad (ﷺ) felt the intense ringing of bells and heard Gabriel recite the literal words of God. Words so powerful that it felt like they were inscribed on his heart: “Recite in the name of your Lord who created - Created man from a clinging substance. Recite and your Lord is the most Generous.” [96:1-3][23]

He ran from the cave in terror, trying to escape the intense and frightening experience. But everywhere he looked on the horizon, he saw Gabriel; he could not escape it; he had already been chosen.

Over a period of 23 years, the revelations continued to come. The verses make up the Holy Qur’an, and Muhammad (ﷺ) and the believers committed them to memory, in addition to having designated scribes copy the verses onto parchments and flat bones.

The thriving city of Makkah saw Muhammad (ﷺ) as a grave threat; their strong economy depended upon the commerce of tribes that came to pay homage to the many idols housed in Makkah. The Makkan chiefs, upon seeing Islaam spread, summoned Muhammad (ﷺ) and offered him any amount of wealth or power he wanted, in exchange for him to stop preaching. To this offer, which was delivered by his own uncle, Muhammad’s reply was swift: “If they placed the sun in my right hand, and the moon in my left, I would not abandon this path I am on.”

For teaching the concept of One God and obedience to His law, Muhammad (ﷺ) was mocked, beaten and cast out by his own people, who refused to abandon the idols and blood sacrifices surrounding the religions of their forefathers.

[23] *The numbers in brackets refer to the Surah (chapter) then to the Aayaat (verses) in the Holy Qur’an.*

When he visited the city of Taif, people sent their children and slaves to hurl stones at him. The people of Makkah once draped the intestines of a camel upon his blessed shoulders while he was prostrating in prayer, then doubled over in laughter at their cruel prank. The Makkan's seized several believers, men and women, torturing and even killing them, and several attempts were made on Muhammad's life.

After 13 years of harsh conditions in Makkah, including a social and economic boycott in which Makkans were forbidden to meet, marry, or trade with the Muslim minority, Muhammad (ﷺ) emigrated to the welcoming city of Yathrib[24], some four hundred kilometers to the north of Makkah. The city adopted the name "Madinah," and is still known today with the same name. Muhammad (ﷺ) was made head of state and in matter of years established an advanced and just political, legal, economic and social system.

[24] Yathrib is the old name for Madinah

His years of prophethood were at many times tumultuous, but he knew his patience and perseverance was not in vain and would not go unnoticed. He was always conscious that Allaah was All-Seeing, All-Knowing.

A Bill of Rights for all Times

By Salah As-Sawi

The compounded[25] text of [what is commonly referred to as] the Farewell Sermon given by the Prophet (ﷺ) during his only Hajj shortly before his death, is an eternal code of conduct for the Muslim nation. Salah As-Sawi shows that the best way to know the Prophet (ﷺ) is to examine his own words in light of modern discourse.

[25] *Hadith experts count four sermons that the Prophet gave during his Hajj, of which the first was focused on how to perform the Hajj, whereas the last three make up his final set of general instructions for his nation.*

A striking fact about the sermon is that it is mainly concerned with rights and obligations of Muslims towards each other, as well as towards all humankind. It barely mentions what Muslims owe Allaah in worship. This part of the faith, which is concerned with the Oneness of God and the special relationship between Him and His creation and servants, was expounded in the first thirteen years of the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ). In a sense, what the Prophet (ﷺ) was saying to the members of his nation was that together, we have built a house (the religion of Islaam), and I showed you the way one brick at a time, starting with the foundation stone (the Oneness of God). This shall be your abode; the only one that Allaah will accept from you. Now I leave you with a set of instructions on how to live, both within the confines of your house and with neighboring houses.

As-Sawi argues that the most fundamental lesson to be learnt by Muslims from the sermon, is "… that the ultimate source of reference and infallible evidence is the Divine law of Allaah[26] and nothing else."

[26] *Called the Shari'ah in Arabic.*

By examining the parts of the sermon more deeply, we can gain insight into the personality of this great and humane leader who exuded humility, genuine care and kindness, even at this critical time in his mission, when he was leaving the believers with his final testimony.

A Bill of Rights for All Times

Abu Bakrah and Jaaber ibn Abdullah[27] reported the following talk by the Prophet (ﷺ), which came to be known as the "Farewell Sermon":

[27] Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ).

"Time has come full circle. It has come back to the day when Allaah created the heavens and the earth. A year has twelve months, four of which are sacred, and save Rajab, which comes between Jumada and Sha'ban, three of these are consecutive: Thul Qi'dah, Thul Hijjah, and Muharram[28]."

[28] The Arabic months are: Muharram, Safar, Rabi' 1st, Rabi' 2nd, Jumada 1st, Jumada 2nd, Rajab, Sha'ban, Ramadhaan, Shawwaal, Thul Qi'dah, and Thul Hijjah.

"What month of the year are we in?"

"Allaah and His Messenger know best," we answered. He paused for a while until we thought that he was going to give the month a different name.

"Is it not Thul Hijjah?" "Indeed it is," we answered.

"What town is this?" Allaah and His Messenger know best, we answered. He paused for a while till we thought he was going to give the town a different name.

"Is it not the Sacred Town[29]?"

[29] A synonym of Makkah.

"Indeed it is," we answered.

"What day is it?"

"Allaah and His Messenger know best", we answered. He paused for a while till we thought he was going to give the day a different name.

"Is it not the day of Sacrifice?"

"Indeed it is," we replied.

"Your blood, possessions, and honor are as sacred as this day of yours, in

this town of yours, in this month of yours."

"It is incumbent upon those who are present to inform those who are absent because those who are absent might comprehend (what I have said) better than the present audience."

"Beware! Do not renegade (as) disbelievers after me by killing one another."

"Lo! Every thing from the affairs of Jahiliyyah[30] is under my feet. The blood (retribution for killing) from the Jahiliyyah is hereby annulled. The first blood to be annulled is our own blood; the blood of Rabi'ah ibn Al-Harith, who was under the foster care of Bani Sa'd and was killed by Huthail[31].

"Usury is under my feet as well, and the first in this regard is our own usury: The usury of Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib[32]. All of that is annulled forever.

"Fear Allaah in your dealing with women, you have taken them under the protection of Allaah, and made their marriage to you lawful by the Word of Allaah. It is your right upon them that they should not allow whomever you dislike to enter your homes. If they do, then you are permitted to correct them gently. Their right upon you is that you provide for them, food and clothing, in all fairness.

"I have left you with something that, should you adhere to it, you shall never go astray: Allaah's Book.

"What are you going to say when you are asked about me?

They all said: "We will testify that you have delivered the message, and counseled the nation."

He raised his index finger to the sky and said: "O Allaah! Be my witness, O Allaah! Be my witness, O Allaah! Be my witness."[33]

The Prophet (ﷺ) learnt that the end of his mission was approaching and

[30] Pre-Islaamic state of ignorance and paganism in Arabia.

[31] Bani Sa'd and Huthail are both tribes from Arabia.

[32] Paternal uncle of the Prophet (ﷺ).

[33] The text of the sermon is compounded from several narrations found in the books of Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Abu Dawood, At-Tirmithi and Ibn Maajah.

bade farewell to his Companions in the largest and most blessed of gatherings. Scholars estimate that more than one hundred thousand pilgrims were present during the Farewell Sermon.

The text of the Farewell Sermon touches on several very important aspects of the code of conduct that the Prophet (ﷺ) entrusted to Muslims. It did not elaborate. A thorough examination of the text, aided by other statements and practices of the Prophet (ﷺ), ensured that the prophetic guidance, which was entrusted to the companions, reached us.

[34] *Divine law and code of conduct.*

The Authority of Shari'ah [34]

Nasi' was the name of a pre-Islaamic practice whereby the Arabs used to shift the sacredness of the month of Muharram to that of Safar in order to permit war in Muharram, while keeping the number of sacred months intact. The reason for switching the sacredness of Muharram to Safar, which was practiced by Arabs in Jahiliyyah, had to do with two things: First, a prolonged period of three sacred months without war and raids meant that, pillaging, the main source of income for most tribes was put on hold. Second, the month of Thul Hijjah (the month of Hajj) which was the second of the three consecutive sacred month, meant that Arabs traveled to Makkah, made offerings that included sacrificial animals, and donned sin-free garments necessary for the circumambulation around Ka'abah. The prolonged war-free season and the cost of Hajj combined to incite some shrewd politicians to shift the sanctity of Muharram to Safar, which gave them a breathing room to replenish their coffers early on.

Time coming back full circle, as used in the Farewell Sermon, meant the return of the month of Muharram to its position in sanctity; as Allaah had originally ordained it.

On that public occasion, the Prophet (ﷺ), stressed the abolition of all Jahiliyyah behavior and practices. At that time, the Arabs used to alter divine laws and restrictions and to permit or prohibit acts with no authority from Allaah.

They, for example, used to prohibit eating certain plants or animals with no evidence of prohibition from Allaah, and would sacrifice their own children as an offering to Allaah Almighty. The emphasis the Prophet (ﷺ) laid on this issue protected the rulings on these matters, prevented people from altering them, and established the Divine Inspiration as the supreme reference in settling disputes.

The most important point in all this is that the ultimate source of reference and infallible evidence is the Shari'ah and nothing else.

Human Rights

In this historic sermon, the Prophet of Islaam (ﷺ) declared a number of principles that laid the foundation of human rights. These principles were not merely empty mottoes meant for public consumption, rather they were the very principles he had preached and practiced ever since the beginning of his mission. In his Farewell Sermon, the Prophet (ﷺ) taught these principles to his Companions so that they would convey them to the whole world as a light guiding mankind through their life and as a safeguard against worldly tempests. The principles he set forth while being persecuted along with a few weak Companions in Makkah were the very same principles he declared in his Farewell Sermon to more than one hundred thousand devotees! And the same principles have been firmly entrenched and re-iterated in the words and actions of his followers ever since.

A Universal Declaration

In his Farewell Sermon, the Prophet (ﷺ) declared the God-given rights of all humankind to life, property, and dignity, irrespective of religion, race, gender, social status or nationality. He gave more details of the rights of often oppressed segments of societies such as orphans and women. He spoke of the rights and duties of both subjects and rulers, and declared that every human being has the right to security and stability. These rights being sacred and

God-given, he declared, means they can never be undermined, deferred or abrogated.

Rights to Life, Property and Honor

The present-day atrocities and violations of sanctities that have become a predominant feature of today's world make us admire the sanctity of life, personal possessions and honor stated in the Farewell Sermon of the Prophet (ﷺ).

The analogy employed by the Prophet (ﷺ) of the day, month, place and human life, is noteworthy because the pilgrims were certain of the sanctity of the time and place, but not of human life and possessions, which were considered fair game in the pre-Islaamic era. The Prophet (ﷺ) proclaimed that the life, property and honor of a Muslim are as sacred as the time and place in which he spoke.

To take a human life unlawfully is to be cast out of the religion of Islaam. When someone dies, Allaah may pardon all sins except that of disbelief or the premeditated murder of a believer. Hence death is the penalty prescribed by the Shari'ah to protect society from such criminals. Allaah says: "And there is for you in Qisas[35] [saving of] life, O you [people] of understanding, that you may become righteous," [2:179] and, "But whoever kills a believer intentionally his recompense is Hell." [4:93]

[35] *Legal retribution.*

Sanctity of Life

Islaam has accorded human life great sanctity. Although the Prophet (ﷺ) was primarily addressing a Muslim gathering, the sanctity of life involves both Muslims and non-Muslims. Human life in Islaam is sacred by its own right, regardless of nationality, religion, or race. The Sunnah[36] is an undeniable proof of this fact: The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered his Companions to respect the funerals of Muslims and non-Muslims alike. When the Prophet (ﷺ) stood up

[36] *Tradition, action, teachings, and lifestyle of the Prophet (ﷺ).*

for a funeral of a Jew, someone said to him, "it is a funeral of a Jew!" "Is it not a human soul?" replied the Merciful Prophet (ﷺ).

Life is sacrosanct for all except for those who have declared war against Islaam and Muslims. The ruling in this regard is clearly stated in the Qur'an: "Fight in the way of Allaah those who fight you, but do not transgress. Indeed, Allaah does not like transgressors." [2:190]

Non-Muslims protected by the Islaamic state under some contract are called the people of Thimmah[37] or the Thimmis[38] . The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "On the Day of Judgment, I will remonstrate against whoever acts unjustly towards a Mu'aahed[39]: cheats him, forces him do things beyond his capability, or takes something away from him without his full consent.[40]" The scholar Al-Qarafi said: "The Thimmah contract entails certain duties that we must observe. Under such contract we are obliged to treat (the pledge people) as our neighbors. They are under our protection as well as the protection of Allaah, his Messenger (ﷺ), and the Muslim religion. He who commits or partakes in an act of aggression against any of them by way of slander or harm will be in breach of the pledge of Allaah, His Messenger and Islaam."

[37] *Inviolability.*

[38] *A coined expression, derived from the word Thimmah, which came to mean a non-Muslim living in Muslim countries.*

[39] *Literally meaning: someone with whom a pact has been agreed upon, but it carries the same legal definitions as Thimmi.*

[40] *Narrated by several companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) in the book of Abu Dawood.*

History will never forget the stance of the scholar Ibn Taymiyyah when the Tatar armies ransacked Damascus. He went to negotiate the release of the captives with the Tatar King Qatlu Shah. The King agreed to release Muslim but not Thimmi captives. Ibn Taymiyyah, however, positively refused to accept that offer. "We will not settle for less than the release of all Jewish and Christian captives," Ibn Taymiyyah told the King. "They are under our protection, and we do not abandon a Muslim or a Thimmi captive." Seeing Ibn Taymiyyah's insistence, the King agreed to release all captives.

Islaam also considers possessions and personal honor to be sacred. Muslims' possessions are protected by belief, and those of non-Muslims by Amaan[41] . It is Amaan that the peoples of the world have sought ever since they signed United Nations-brokered charters and those concluded by diplomatic missions in various countries in modern times.

[41] *A pledge of safety.*

The Qur'an says: "Allaah does not forbid you from being benevolent and acting justly towards those who do not fight you because of your religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allaah loves those who act justly." [60:8] In his explanation of this verse, the scholar Al-Qarafi explained the manifestations of kindness to peaceful non-Muslims. He said: "Being kind to them (non-Muslims) means to have mercy on the weak, to help the poor, to feed the hungry, to give clothing to the needy, and to speak to them gently out of mercy and kindness, not out of fear and humiliation. It also entails tolerance in case they show bad neighborliness despite the ability to stop them. This is again out of kindness to them not out of fear or greediness. We should pray to Allaah to guide them to Islaam and to make them happy. We should provide them with good advice regarding worldly and religious affairs, and should avoid slandering them if they hurt someone. Moreover, we should protect their possessions, families and honor and maintain all their rights and interests, and help them to fend off any injustice and to get all their rights."

Protection of Non-Muslims

No bloodshed is permitted except in a lawful war that is fought to combat aggression either against Muslim countries or against Islaam itself. Allaah says: "Fight in the way of Allaah those who fight you, but do not transgress. Indeed, Allaah does not like transgressors." [2:190] And He says: "And what is [the matter] with you that you fight not in the cause of Allaah and [for] the oppressed among men, women and children who say, Our Lord, take us out of this city of oppressive people and appoint for us from Yourself a protector and appoint for us from Yourself a helper?" [4:75]

Fighting is permitted as a defensive or a pre-emptive measure, depending on whether aggression has actually taken place or is imminent. The Prophet's wars were restricted to these two reasons, as can be seen from his biographical literature. The scholars of Islaam are unanimous about this issue. The reason for this is simply the creed: "There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong." [2:256] This nation is based on guidance, not on force and plunder. Hence

the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited the killing of non-combatants such as women, children and the elderly.

Rules of a Lawful War

For a war to be lawful, a number of necessary conditions and rules must be observed. For example, perfidy (breaking a pact) is strictly forbidden. Treaties must be honored at any cost. Under no circumstances are Muslims allowed to violate them. If, however, they are afraid that an enemy may treacherously and unilaterally break an agreement, they must inform the enemy openly and unequivocally that they will annul it. Allaah says: "If you have (reason) to fear from a people betrayal, throw (their treaty) back to them, (putting you) on equal terms. Indeed Allaah does not like traitors." [8:58] The great scholar Imaam Ahmad quoted the Follower [of the Prophet's companions] Salim ibn Amer as saying: "When Mu'awyiah [the first Umayyad Caliph] was marching in Roman land, he wanted to get close to their camp so that he might attack them when the treaty between him and the Romans had expired. At that moment, an old man riding his mount shouted, "Allaahu Akbar[42] ! Redemption, not treachery! The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "He who has entered a treaty must not alter it until the period has expired, or he should let the other side know of the annulment so that he and they would be on equal footing." As soon as Mu'awyiah heard these words, he returned. The old man was the companion Amr ibn Absah."

[42] *Allaah is greatest.*

Second, war can be waged against combatants only, not against women, children, the elderly, or monks living in monasteries, etc. The Islaamic texts are very explicit about this. The companion Ibn Umar reported: "I found the body of a woman killed in one of the Prophet's wars. The Prophet (ﷺ) then prohibited the killing of women and children.[43]"

[43] *Narrated in Al-Bukhari and Muslim.*

To take revenge because of suspicion or random accusations is also prohibited. Justice is a comprehensive law of Islaam and is not confined to religions or countries. Allaah says: "... and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allaah; indeed, Allaah is Acquainted with what you do." [5:8] Islaam does not

deny Muslims the right to defend themselves, to drive off aggressors, and to prosecute and chastise offenders. But all this must be carried out within the framework of the Shari'ah.

"Amaan" in Contemporary Times

Contemporary international treaties and agreements, entry visas and individual recruitment or citizenship contracts are forms of Amaan treaties in Shari'ah that govern Muslim relationship with non-Muslims.

Amaan is a guarantee against all forms of harm. It is a Muslim-non-Muslim contract according to which each side agrees to refrain from inflicting harm on the other, directly or indirectly. If the enemy is given Amaan, his life and possessions are automatically protected.

There are three types of Amaan treaties in general: Amaan, Hudnah, and Thimmah[44]. Amaan is offering safety to a certain number of people. Hudnah is ceasing hostility for a certain period of time, whereas Thimmah entails a permanent peace treaty. Hudnah and Thimmah are functions of the leadership and are left to the state. Amaan, by contrast, is the right of both the individual and the state.

[44] *Amaan, Hudnah, and Thimmah mean safety, truce and protection, respectively*

Allaah says: "And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allaah [Qur'an]. Then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are people who do not know." [9:6]

Amaan contracts obligate both parties to refrain from inflicting harm on each other, whether the party to the pledge is a non-Muslim in a Muslim territory or a Muslim in a non-Muslim territory. The scholar Ibn Qudamah said: "If the enemy combatants are granted Amaan, it is prohibited to take their lives or possessions, or to inflict harm upon them."

Safeguarding Personal Property

Some Muslims deem it acceptable to misappropriate, embezzle or plunder the properties of non-Muslims outside Muslims countries. Entry or residence in any country entails a contract or pact with that state that is binding on Muslims. Misappropriation of any kind in such places is a crime denounced by Islaam.

Visas granted to Muslims to enable them to enter a non-Muslim country are temporary safety pledges according to which the people of the country concerned trust them with their lives, property and honor. It also obligates Muslims to abide by the laws of that country during their stay, within the boundaries of Shari'ah.

No Deceit in Treaties

Breaking a pledge is strictly prohibited in Islaam. Every perfidious person will have a humiliating sign raised high in proportion with his perfidy on the Day of Judgment. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "A Muslim's word of honor is indivisible and is valid and sound even when given by the lowest in rank. Allaah, the angels, and all the people will curse him who lets a Muslim down.[45]" The Prophet (ﷺ) also explained that a hypocrite is known by perfidy, therefore, someone who enters into a pledge must honor it to the end: Under no circumstances must they break it.

[45] *Narrated by Ali ibn Abu Taaleb in the books of Al-Bukhari and Muslim.*

The Goals of Shari'ah

"Your blood, possessions, and honor are sacred."

These words of the Prophet (ﷺ) are of key importance in establishing the general objectives and aims of Shari'ah. These objectives are not merely some rules of Shari'ah, rather they are the very goals and ends for which the entire Shari'ah is instituted. The scholars agree that these principles are: the protection of religion, mind, soul, possessions, and honor.

Giving priority to souls over possessions and honor indicates the priority of blood over other sanctities.

End All Wrong Practices

"All Jahiliyah practices are under my foot," is how the Prophet (ﷺ) started addressing this topic. The term Jahiliyyah refers to the pre-Islaamic life that was marked by unreasonable and inappropriate beliefs about Allaah, corrupt system of judgment, obscene social habits, chauvinism and fanaticism that were at odds with reason and faith. In his address to that colossal gathering during the Farewell Hajj, the Prophet (ﷺ) abolished all corrupt beliefs, values and obscenities of Jahiliyyah.

Rule of Law and Rights

Islaam has freed people from racism and fanaticism, directing their loyalty to the truth that Allaah has revealed, commanding them to observe justice and fairness, to be Allaah's witnesses, and to testify justly even against their own selves. In this regard, Islaam does not distinguish between those residing within or without Muslim land. This is a general law addressing Muslims wherever they are. A Muslim may not support wrongdoers, be they Muslims or non-Muslims, individuals or governments. Allaah says: "You will not find a people who believe in Allaah and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allaah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those— He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him." [58:21] This means that Muslims may not favor wrongdoers even though they are among those closest to them.

Allaah orders us to stand against the enemies of Allaah, even if they are our closest relatives. Muslims do not hate a certain country or culture. Rather, there is a general criterion of justice and truth where East and West are treat-

ed equally. We have seen amazing examples of this impartial justice in Muslim history. We have seen Islaam liberating its followers from blind prejudice to the tribe, the clan, or the lineage. The battle of Badr was a test for Muslims because they had to fight against their own blood, fathers, sons and brothers, for the sake of their faith. Loyalty to belief surpassed all other loyalties.

History will never forget the likes of the incident of Samarqand when the inhabitants complained to the Caliph Umar ibn Abdul Aziz about the commander of the Muslim army who conquered their country before calling them to Islaam. Umar ibn Abdul Aziz ordered his judge to do them justice, and to drive the victorious armies out of Samarqand until all the procedures clearly stated in the Shari'ah texts had been fulfilled. The forces did indeed withdraw, and that encouraged most of the inhabitants of Samarqand to embrace Islaam.

Another example is the censure by the scholar Imam Auza'i of the Abbasid governor who evacuated a group of Thimmis to Mount Lebanon because some of them had disobeyed the governor's tax collector. Auza'i wrote a lengthy letter to the governor, criticizing collective punishment, and quoted from the Qur'an: "That no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another." [53:38] Auza'i concluded his letter by saying: "These people are not slaves that you may move from one place to another; they are free people and Thimmis."

In the Pre-Islaamic era, racism was rampant in the Arab society. The Prophet of Islaam (ﷺ) wiped out all forms of this debilitating disease. He described it as a remnant of Jahiliyyah, the demise of which he declared in the Farewell Sermon. No Arab may claim superiority over a non-Arab except in righteousness. No pride should be taken in pedigree, lineage, or race. Racial conflicts and national disputes are but falsehood and deceit. People are not evaluated in terms of the color of their skin, nor in terms of their wealth or worldly position. All these are from Allaah and not from human choice.

There is only one valid criterion of evaluation, and Allaah is its only judge. The scholar Tabarani explains this using a quote from the companion Al-Adda' ibn Khalid who said: "I sat under the pulpit of the Prophet (ﷺ) on

the day of the Farewell Hajj. The Prophet stood on the pulpit, thanked and praised Allaah, and said: "'O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allaah is the most righteous,' [49:13] Therefore, no Arab has superiority over a non-Arab, no non-Arab over an Arab, no black person over a red person, and no red person over a black person, except in righteousness. O people of Quraysh[46]! Do not come carrying the burden of this life on your necks, while others come with the (rewards of) Hereafter. I cannot be of help to you before Allaah. O people, Allaah has saved you from the arrogance of Jahiliyyah, bragging and boasting of lineage. People are of two types: the first type is a man righteous in the sight of Allaah and held in high esteem; the second is a wicked man, wretched and of low esteem in the sight of Allaah. All humankind are children of Adam, and Adam was created from earth."

[46] *The Prophet's tribe.*

Abolishing Blood Retribution and Usury

Jahiliyyah blood retribution were abolished. The first blood to go with impunity was that of Rabi'ah, a cousin of the Prophet (ﷺ). Similarly, the Jahiliyyah usury was abolished. The generality of the words of the Prophet (ﷺ) applies to all corrupt pre-Islaamic legacies. On the other hand, the good and natural morals from Abraham's religion, natural human disposition such as helping the oppressed, telling the truth, honesty, generosity, were encouraged and perfected by Islaam.

It is worth mentioning that although the word Jahiliyyah refers to polytheism and disbelief, it refers primarily to pre-Islaamic times, and if used to refer to some practices after Islaam, the term must be qualified, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "A group of my followers will always be righteous..." This means that there will never be complete Jahiliyyah in this nation again.

Kindness and Fairness to Women

In his Farewell Sermon, the Prophet emphasized both women's rights and duties. If only men and women truly understood and obeyed Islaamic principles, Muslim women would be dignified, and would enjoy a most pleasant life, in addition to attaining great reward from Allaah in the hereafter. The guidelines put forth by the Prophet (ﷺ) were meant to be a pre-emptive measure against any possible corruption that may result if women are either oppressed or transgressed Islaamic guidelines.

When the Muslim society practiced and embodied the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ), justice and kindness prevailed among men and women of the Islaamic society and women made monumental contributions to the scholarship of Islaam, in addition to all other walks of life.

Muslim Women in Scholarship

Throughout Islaamic history, Muslim women have taken part in building the Muslim community. Like their male counterpart, Muslim women were narrators and scholars of Hadith. Scholars have never rejected any Hadith because the narrator was female. Women played a great role in Islaamic scholarship. The scholar Al-Hafez Ath-Thahabi said: "No woman has ever been known to have lied in reporting Hadith." He also said: "I have never known a woman who has been accused of lying, or left out as untrustworthy [in narrating Hadith]." There were some eighty women among the students of the great Hadith scholar Ibn Asaaker! Abu Muslim Al-Farahidi – another Hadith scholar – collected Hadith from over seventy women. Some Muslim women were pupils of Ash-Shaafi'ee, Al-Bukhari, Ibn Khillikan, and Ibn Hayyan[47], and many others. The scholar Ash-Shawkani said: "No scholar was known to reject a report because the reporter was a woman. Many Sunnah actions were accepted by the Muslim nation from a single woman of the Prophet's Companions. None of the Sunnah scholars can deny this fact."

[47] *All were highly respected scholars.*

Mutual Rights and Duties

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Fear Allaah in your dealing with women, you have taken them under the protection of Allaah, and made their marriage to you lawful by the word of Allaah. It is your right upon them that they should not allow whomever you dislike to enter your homes. If they do, then you are permitted to correct them gently. Their rights upon you is that you provide for them food and clothing in all fairness."

This means:

1. Women were degraded and oppressed and had their rights usurped in Jahiliyyah time. That is why the Prophet (ﷺ) warned against this practice and condemned those who perpetrate this kind of act when he started talking about women saying, "Fear Allaah as you deal with women."

2. Islaam urges men to observe women's rights and to deal with them kindly. A man should not frown at his wife and should speak kindly to her without being rude or harsh. He must not show an inclination towards another woman, and must take care of his appearance as much as he can. Allaah says: "And due to them (i.e., the wives) is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable." [2:28] The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Perfect Iman[48] lies in perfect manners, and the best among you are the best in treating their wives.[49]" The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "they should not allow whomever you dislike to enter your homes." The Prophet (ﷺ) did not mean adultery, as this is a sin that incurs clear retribution, and is prohibited with those whom the husband hates or does not hate. The scholar Al-Qadhi Eyaadh said: "The meaning of this instruction is that a woman may not allow another man or a woman, be it a blood relative or not, in the husband's home if she knows that her husband dislikes it."

In his commentary on this part of the sermon, the scholar Ibn Jarir said: "The meaning of this [instruction to women] is that women may not allow outsider men to enter their homes to talk to them. Arabs used to condone this practice, but when the Hijaab verse was revealed, it was forbidden for men to sit and

[48] *True faith.*

[49] *Narrated by Abu Hurayrah in the book of At-Tirmithi.*

talk to women."

To Practice Before Preaching

This has always been the way of Allaah's Messengers, Prophets and all righteous people who followed in their footsteps. Our Prophet (ﷺ) would not have established the basis of rights and justice if he had allowed himself or his close relatives to violate these principles. Therefore, he first let Jahiliyyah blood and usury of his family members be annulled. The closer people are to social reformers, the more they should follow their example. This gives reformers more credibility and makes people revere and trust them. Clearly, as the scholar Imam Nawawi said, what the Prophet said is a lesson for the leaders and other people of authority among Muslims who preach good and forbid evil to begin with themselves and those closest to them.

Conclusion

The forceful and truthful words of the Prophet (ﷺ) still resound until today in the hearts and minds of millions of true followers of Islaam. If we are ever to see human rights, human dignity and justice truly prevail in the world, it is the words of Allaah's Prophet (ﷺ), and not the agreements of cunning politicians and statesmen, that will be effective. Following on the footsteps of Muhammad and Abraham, alayhem As-Salam[50], the beloved Messengers of Allaah, is the only effective way of implementing true human rights. Whenever a society deviates from the path of Allaah delineated by Qur'an and Sunnah, it falls into a pit of misery and injustice. One great witness to this truth was Malcolm X who traveled from the pit of racism to the heights of equality and brotherhood of Islaam during Hajj.

[50] *May Allaah exalt their mention.*

The words and example of the Prophet (ﷺ) have brought equality, justice and honor to countless oppressed peoples victimized by Godless racism and inequality throughout history.

Muslims: Stand up and carry this message of truth, justice and human dignity to the world, for the world is sorely in need of it!

The Rights of the Prophet

By Umm AbdurRahman Hirschfelder

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was a special man, a very special man indeed. The messenger of Allaah, the leader of the believers, the intercessor for the believers on the Day of Judgment, and above all, the one with the highest status before Allaah: He deserves very special rights. These rights, argues Umm AbdurRahman Hirschfelder: "… have been enjoined upon us by Allaah and are part of safeguarding the perfect religion of Islaam."

It is no surprise; therefore, that he himself warned the believers not to take his love and his rights beyond what is honorably suitable for a man, for he was after all just a man and a servant to Allaah. Hirshcfelder in her lucid compilation of the rights of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) emphasizes that: "… it is also important that we do not go to extremes regarding his rights."

The Rights of the Prophet

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) deserves special rights: Rights which are due only to the final Prophet and Messenger (ﷺ). These rights have been enjoined upon us by Allaah and are part of safeguarding the perfect religion of Islaam. Unfortunately, many Muslims today have become confused about these rights and have introduced innovations that have no basis in Islaam. The Prophet knew that such practices would happen and warned against them, "Beware of newly invented matters [in religion] for every invented matter [in religion] is a cursed innovation which leads astray.[51]" So Muslims must stick to giving our Prophet (ﷺ) the rights given to him by Allaah, and stay away from innovations that either ignore these rights or take them to extremes.

[51] *Narrated by Al-Irbaadh ibn Saariyah in the books of At-Tirmithi and Abu Dawud.*

Allaah sent Muhammad (ﷺ) to all of mankind, with the divine message of, La Ilaah Illa Allaah[52]. He brought glad tidings of Paradise to the believers and warning of the punishment of Hellfire to the disbelievers. He called to Tawheed[53], the belief that Allaah is the sole Creator and Lord of the universe, and therefore only He should be worshipped.

[52] *The Arabic text for the testimony that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allaah.*

[53] *Monotheism.*

Believing in Allaah requires believing in His Messenger (ﷺ), and according him his rights, which are:

The First Right: To Believe Him and Believe in Him

There is no doubt that the first of our Prophet's rights is to believe in him and to believe in the message he was sent with. Allaah says: " So believe in Allaah and His Messenger and the light [i.e., the Qur'an] which We have sent down." [64:8] Al-Qadhi Eyaadh said in "Ash-Shifaa" (his famous and important book about the rights of the Prophet (ﷺ)) that: "Belief in the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is therefore an obligation for every individual. Belief is not complete without it and Islaam is only valid with it." Allaah has linked belief in Him with belief in His Messenger. They are inseparable. This is what Shahadah[54] means. Even if people follow other prophets like Moses and Jesus, sallallaahu alayhem wa sallam, they are not believers until they completely follow the teachings of Muhammad (ﷺ).

[54] *The declaration of faith.*

Believing in the Prophet (ﷺ), therefore, is about living according to his guidance. It is much more than just mere recognition of the fact that he is a prophet. Allaah says: "When the hypocrites come to you, [O Muhammad], they say, "We testify that you are the Messenger of Allaah." And Allaah knows that you are His Messenger, and Allaah testifies that the hypocrites are liars." [63:1]

At the time of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) the Jews who lived in Arabia had been waiting for the promised Prophet that they knew about from their scriptures. But when Muhammad (ﷺ) came they rejected him out of arrogance because he was not a Jew. Many of the rabbis, however, recognized that he was a Prophet but did not accept him or believe in him. Allaah says about them: "Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [i.e., Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)] as they know their own sons. But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it]." [2:146]

The scholar Ibn Is-haaq reports in his biography of the Prophet (ﷺ) that Safiya bint Huyayy[55] said: "I was the favorite child of my father and my Uncle Abu Yasir. When I was present they took no notice of their other children. When the apostle was staying in Quba[56] with the brother Amr ibn Auf, the two went to see him before daybreak and did not return until after nightfall, weary, worn out, drooping and feeble. I went up to them in childish pleasure as I always did, and they were so sunk in gloom that they took no notice of me. I heard my uncle say to my father: 'Is he the one? Do you recognize him? Can you be sure?' 'Yes!' 'And what do you feel about him?" "By God I shall be his enemy as long as I live!'"

Believing in something is more than just recognizing that it exists. Satan; as explained in the Qur'an; recognizes that Allaah exists yet he is the worst of the disbelievers.

[55] *The Prophet (ﷺ) married her after the battle of Khaybar.*

[56] *A suburb of Madinah where the Prophet (ﷺ) stayed for a couple of days before formally entering Madinah after emigrating from Makkah.*

The second Right: To Obey Him

The second right due to our beloved Prophet (ﷺ) is that we obey him. Allaah says: "O you, who have believed, obey Allaah and His Messenger..." [8:20] Allaah has mentioned obedience to the Messenger in connection with obedience to Him. You cannot have one without the other. Obeying the Messenger means, following his commands and staying away from what he has prohibited. Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet said; "All of my followers will enter Paradise except for those who refuse to." They asked, "O Messenger of Allaah; who will refuse?" He replied. "Whoever obeys me will enter the Paradise. Whoever disobeys me has refused.[57]"

[57] *Narrated in the book of Al-Bukhari.*

The Third Right: To Follow Him

Allaah says: "There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allaah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allaah and the Last Day..." [33:21] Commenting on this verse, the scholar Imam At-Tirmithi said: "To take the Messenger as a model means to emulate him, follow his Sunnah and avoid opposition to him in either word or action." We should strive to follow his mode of life, implement his instructions, and emulate his actions, conduct and manners.

We can see from the Prophet's companions, the way in which they emulated the Prophet (ﷺ), followed his examples, and modeled their behavior after his. This is what it means to follow Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). A man from Khalid ibn Asid's family asked Abdullah ibn Umar: "Abu Abdurrahman: We find the fear prayer[58] and the home prayer[59] in the Qur'an, but we do not find the travel prayer (prayer performed while traveling)." Ibn Umar said: "O My nephew: Allaah sent Muhammad (ﷺ) to us when we did not know anything. We do as we saw him doing."

[58] *Prayer performed when one fears for his/her life, especially during warfare.*

[59] *Prayer performed at home.*

When Umar looked at the Black Stone[60] he said: "You are a stone that can neither help nor harm. Had I not seen the Messenger of Allaah kiss you, I would not have kissed you." Then he kissed it. Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz said: "The Messenger of Allaah made a Sunnah and the people in command after him made Sunnahs. To adopt them is to confirm the Book of Allaah and to act on

[60] *A noble stone that adorns one of the corners of Ka'abah.*

them is to obey Allaah and strengthen the Deen[61] of Allaah. It is not for anyone to change the Sunnah, or alter it, or to look into the opinion of those who oppose it. Whoever follows it is guided. Whoever seeks help by it, will have victory. Whoever opposes it and follows other than the path of the believers, Allaah will entrust him to what he turns to and will roast him in the Hellfire, which is a bad ending."

[61] *Religion, dogma, and way of life.*

The Forth Right: To Love Him

A Muslim must love the Prophet truthfully. Allaah says: "Say, [O Muhammad], "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allaah and His Messenger and Jihaad [i.e., striving] in His cause, then wait until Allaah executes His command." [9:25] The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "None of you will believe until I am more beloved to you than your children, your fathers and all people." Umar ibn Al-Khattab said to the Prophet (ﷺ): "I love you more than anything except my soul, which is between my two sides." The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "None of you will believe until I am dearer to him than his own soul." Umar [having briefly reflected on the matter] said: "By the One who sent down the Book to you, I love you more than my soul which is between my two sides." The Prophet said: "Now O Umar, now you have it.[62]"

[62] *Narrated in the book of Al-Bukhari.*

Related to this love is Nasiha[63]. It is used to designate the desire for what is good for the one who is its object. Linguistically it means purity. The Messenger of Allaah said "Deen is Nasiha. Deen is Nasiha. Deen is Nasiha." They asked: "To whom, O Messenger of Allaah?" He said: "To Allaah and His Book and His Messenger and the rulers of the Muslims and to the common people.[64]" Nasiha to the Messenger of Allaah is confirming his Prophethood, obeying him, supporting and protecting him, and following his Sunnah. The scholar Abu Bakr al-Ajurri said: "Nasiha for his sake includes two types of sincere conduct: One is Nasiha during his lifetime and the other is Nasiha after his death." During his lifetime it was helping, protecting, and obeying him. After his death it is "by maintaining esteem, respect and great love for him, and by persevering in learning his Sunnah and understanding his Shari'ah. It

[63] *Nasiha is usually translated as good counsel and sincere conduct.*

[66] *Narrated by Tamim Ad-Daary in the book of Muslim.*

is to love his family and his companions, to avoid things disliked in his Sunnah and what deviates from it."

As loving the Prophet (ﷺ) is an obligation, it comes with an excellent reward. Anas said that a man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked: "When will the last Hour come, Messenger of Allaah?" He said: "What have you prepared for it?" The man said: "I have not prepared a lot of prayer or fasting or charity for it, but I love Allaah and His Messenger." The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "You will be with the ones you love.[65]" He also said: "Whoever loves me will be with me in the Garden.[66]"

[65] Narrated in the book of Muslim.

[66] Narrated in the book of An-Nasaa'i.

Love for Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) manifests itself in many ways. It means we will prefer what the Prophet (ﷺ) came with over our own desires. Our anger against people will be for the sake of Allaah. We will remember and mention the Prophet (ﷺ) often. We will have a yearning to meet him. We will exalt and respect him and be humble when we hear his name mentioned. We will have love for the Qur'an that the Prophet (ﷺ) brought. We will have compassion for his community, striving for their best interests.

The Fifth Right: To Respect Him

Allaah says: "Indeed, We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. That you [people] may believe in Allaah and His Messenger and honor him and respect him." [48:8-9] Respect for the Prophet (ﷺ) includes honoring him, exalting him, calling him with the noblest titles such as the Messenger of Allaah or Prophet of Allaah. It includes putting his opinion over our own and defending him if he is verbally abused.

Likewise it is forbidden to curse Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Allaah said: "Indeed, those who abuse Allaah and His Messenger – Allaah has cursed them in this world and the Hereafter and prepared for them a humiliating punishment." [33:57]

Respect for the Prophet (ﷺ) includes respecting his family. He said about Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn[67]: "Whoever loves these two and their father and

[67] The Prophet's grandsons from his daughter Faatimah.

mother will be with me on the day of resurrection.[68]" Abu Bakr said: "Respect Muhammad by respecting the people of his house [his family]."

[68] *Narrated in the book of At Tabaraani.*

It also includes respecting his companions. Allaah says about those who pledged allegiance to the Prophet (ﷺ) at Al-Hudaybiyah: "Certainly was Allaah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muhammad], under the tree." [48:18]

The Prophet said: "Do not curse my companions. If any of you were to spend the weight of Uhud[69] in gold, it still would not reach the measure of one of them or even one-half of it.[70]"

[69] *A mountain near Madinah.*

[70] *Narrated by Abu Hurayrah in the book of Muslim.*

It is also not allowed to even joke about the Prophet (ﷺ) or the religion of Islaam. Allaah said: "And if you ask them, they will surely say, "We were only conversing and playing." Say, "Is it Allaah and His verses and His Messenger that you were mocking?'" [9:65] It is reported that in the course of the campaign of Tabouk[71], a man came up one day and declared: "We have seen not people more gluttonous, more lying, or more cowardly in battle than the Prophet of Allaah and his reciting companions." Auf ibn Maalik rose and said: "It is rather you that are a liar. You are a hypocrite, pretending to be a Muslim. I shall tell the Prophet of Allaah about you." Awf then went to the Prophet to inform him but found that revelation had already preceded him. When the news reached the man, he mounted on his camel, sought the Prophet of Allaah and said: "But we were only joking, trying to pass time while traveling." Ibn Umar said: "He [the man] was clinging to the saddle belt of the Prophet's camel as it ran, his feet and legs being battered by the rough ground, and apologetically repeating: "But we were only joking," but the Prophet kept on repeating without turning his face to him: "Joking? Joking with Allaah? With His revelation? With His Prophet?"

[71] *A city at the far northwest of what is now Saudi Arabia.*

The Sixth Right: To Judge According to His Shari'ah

The sixth right of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is to judge according to his Shari'ah and to fully accept his judgment. Allaah said: "And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allaah and the Messenger." [4:59] Therefore, it is

incumbent upon us to look in the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) when we have a question about something. We must follow the laws that the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) brought and judge by them, and rule according to them.

At the time of the Prophet when he was once reciting: "They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allaah, and [also] the Messiah, the son of Mary. And they were not commanded except to worship one God; there is no deity except Him. Exalted is He above whatever they associate with Him." [9:31] A former Christian, Adi ibn Hatim said: "O Allaah's Messenger. They do not worship them." Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "They certainly do. They (i.e., the rabbis and monks) made lawful things as unlawful and unlawful things as lawful, and they (i.e., Jews and Christians) followed them, and by doing so, they really worshipped them."

We cannot put our own desires above the laws of Allaah and that which the Messenger (ﷺ) brought. Essentially, to do so is to believe that we know better than Allaah. Allaah is our Creator and He knows us better than we know ourselves. "...indeed, He is Knowing of that within the breasts." [67:13] He knows what is best for us and He has perfect wisdom and He is Just in all that He decrees. Ruling by other than what Allaah revealed, therefore, is tantamount to disbelief.

The Seventh Right: To Send Him Salaah and Salaam

This right is concerned with saying the Salaah and Salaam upon him. Allaah says: "Indeed, Allaah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allaah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allaah to grant him] peace." [33:56] Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said: "Whoever blesses me once, Allaah blesses him with ten folds and ten wrong actions are wiped away from his record and he is raised [in status in the hereafter] by ten degrees.[72]" And he said: "The nearest people to me on the day of resurrection will be those who have said the most Salaah upon me[73]."

[72] *Narrated by Anas ibn Maalik in the book of An-Nasaa'i.*

[73] *Narrated by Abdullah ibn Mas'ood in the book of At-Tirmithi.*

The Prophet taught one way in which to say the Salaah unto him. Abu Humayd As-Saidi narrated: "Messenger of Allaah, how should we send Salaah to you?" He replied: "Say, O Allaah, bless Muhammad and his family as You have blessed the family of Ibrahim. And grant blessings to Muhammad and his family as You have granted blessings to the family of Ibrahim. You are the Praiseworthy Glorious.[74]" This is also Tashahhud[75]. Another way is to say, 'sallallaahu alayhe wa sallam' when the Prophet (ﷺ) is mentioned.

[74] Narrated in the book of Ahmad.

[75] The text of supplication in the final seating position of the daily prayers.

The meaning of sending Salaam upon the Prophet is asking Allaah to preserve him from any harm coming to him and it is also a greeting to the Prophet. Abu Hurairah said that the Messenger of Allaah said: "Whenever anyone greets me with peace, Allaah will return my soul to me so that I can return the greeting.[76]" The Prophet (ﷺ) also said: "I will hear whoever blesses me at my grave. If someone is far away and blesses me, it is also conveyed to me.[77]"

[76] Narrated in the book of Ahmad.

[77] Narrated in the book of Al-Bayhaqi.

Since Allaah has commanded that we send Salaah and Salaam upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), then it is a general obligation and not restricted to a specific time. The obligation is that we must do it at least once. However, saying it more than once is highly recommended and is the Sunnah.

Other times include when one is supplicating to Allaah for something. Ibn Mas'ud said: "When one of you wants to ask Allaah for something, he should begin by praising and extolling Him as He deserves, and then by blessing the Prophet (ﷺ). Then his supplication is more likely to be accepted." Likewise, the same is advocated during Athaan[78] on Friday, when entering the mosque and leaving it, or during funeral prayer. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever blesses me in a book or a letter, the angels continue to ask forgiveness for him as long as my name is on it.[79]"

[78] Announcement of prayer time.

[79] Narrated in the book of At-Tabaraani.

The Eighth Right: To Avoid Innovations in Religion, Especially to Do with the Prophet

While Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) deserves the aforementioned rights, it is also important that we do not go to extremes regarding his rights. Many Muslims

have innovated practices and included them as part of the religion concerning his rights, mainly in an attempt to show that they love him. It is indeed correct that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) deserves certain rights, but to innovate practices that go against his very teachings under the guise of loving and respecting him is Bid'ah[80] and will only deviate believers from his straight path. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Beware of newly invented matters (in religion) for every invented matter (in religion] is a cursed innovation which leads astray.[81]"

Many Muslims have gone astray in their attempts to foster and kindle their love for their Prophet (ﷺ). In what follows, a summary of the most important areas of innovations is given:

Bid'ah in deifying him:

One such innovation that Muslims must avoid is to deify Muhammad (ﷺ). This is how Christians went astray with their belief in Jesus. After his death they, i.e., Christians, began to worship him as their god and left Tawheed that he brought them. Allaah says about them: "They have certainly disbelieved who say that Allaah is Christ, the son of Mary. Say, 'Then who could prevent Allaah at all if He had intended to destroy Christ, the son of Mary, or his mother or everyone on the earth?'" [5:17] Likewise, deifying Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) would throw a person into disbelief. Muhammad (ﷺ) was a servant and a worshipper of Allaah. He was a Prophet and a Messenger. Allaah says: "Muhammad is not but a messenger." [3:144] Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said: "Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians exaggerated in their praise of the son of Mary. Indeed I am but a servant of Allaah. So say, 'The servant of Allaah and His Messenger.[82]'"

We cannot claim that Muhammad (ﷺ) could tell the future, or could bring harm or benefit, or even guided anyone out of his own accord and will. These are things that only Allaah knows and has the power to do. Muhammad (ﷺ) only knew what knowledge Allaah revealed to him and he did not have the ability to decree anything. Allaah says: "Say, "I do not know if what you are promised is near or if my Lord will grant for it a [long] period." [He is] Knower of the unseen, and He does not disclose His [knowledge of the] unseen to anyone." [72:25-6]

[80] *Innovation in religion.*

[81] *Part of a Hadith narrated by Al-Irbaadh ibn Saariyah in the book of Abu Dawood.*

[82] *Narrated by Umar ibn Al-Khattaab in the book of Al-Bukhari.*

In keeping away from deifying the Prophet we must also accept his death. He was human and all humans must die. Allaah says: "Indeed, you are to die, and indeed, they are to die." [39:30]

Bid'ah through Istigatha[83]:

Some Muslims have gone astray, to the point of calling upon the Prophet (ﷺ) for help, instead of Allaah. This is tantamount to Shirk[84], which Allaah does not forgive. Allaah says: "And do not invoke besides Allaah that which neither benefits you nor harms you, for if you did, then indeed you would be of the wrongdoers.'" And if Allaah should touch you with adversity, there is no remover of it except Him." [10:106-7]

[83] *Asking for help, especially in matters that Allaah alone can help with.*

[84] *Associating others with Allaah, or polytheism.*

Bid'ah through Tawassul[85]:

Another innovation that has become popular is making Tawassul by the Prophet (ﷺ).

[85] *Coming close and approaching.*

The meaning of Tawassul is to draw near to what one seeks after, and to approach that which one desires. Allaah says in the Qur'an: "O you who have believed, fear Allaah and seek the means [of nearness] to Him and strive in His cause that you may succeed." [5:35]

Three types of Tawassul are allowable in Islaam.

The first is by Allaah's names and attributes. The proof for this is the verse: "And to Allaah belong the best names, so invoke Him by them." [7:180] The meaning of this verse is: "Call upon Allaah, the Most High, by means of [performing Tawassul with] His beautiful Names and Attributes." Also the Prophet (ﷺ) used to seek Allaah's refuge with the words: "O Allaah, I seek refuge in Your Might, none has the right to be worshipped but You.[86]"

[86] *Part of Hadith narrated in the books of Al-Bukhari and Muslim.*

The second is by means of a righteous deed, which one has done. Allaah says: "Those who say, "Our Lord, indeed we have believed, so forgive us our sins and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.'" [3:16] So it is allowed to use a righteous action that one has performed in one's supplication as a means of Tawassul so that his supplication is more likely to be responded to.

The third is through supplications made by a righteous man, such as in going to a man whom one deems to be righteous and asking him to supplicate. There are numerous examples of this in the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ). A man once came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked him to ask Allaah for rain because they were having a drought. The Prophet did so and it rained heavily for a week. Then the same man came back and asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to ask Allaah for the rain to stop and so the Prophet (ﷺ) asked Allaah to divert the rain to the surroundings of Madinah and the clouds made a circle around Madinah and continued to rain.

After the Prophet's death, Umar used to ask the Prophet's uncle, Al-Abbas, to ask Allaah for rain for them. None of the companions, as a matter of fact, supplicated to Allaah for anything using as their Tawassul the right or the status of the Prophet (ﷺ) after his death. They understood that: "... a created being can only benefit another by means of his supplication or means of help while alive. So Allaah, the Most High, loves that we seek nearness to Him by means of believing, righteous actions, sending Salaah and Salaam upon His Prophet (ﷺ) loving him, obeying him and allying ourselves with him. These are the things which Allaah loves to see us seek nearness to Him by means of," as explained by the scholar Ibn Taymiyah.

Bid'ah through Shafa'ah[87]:

Some Muslims are now asking the Prophet for Shafa'ah. Shafa'ah is linguistically defined as: "The intercessor's speaking to a king about a need which he is requesting for someone else, and the intercessor is the one seeking something for someone else, through whom he intercedes to attain what is desired," So people ask the Prophet (ﷺ) to ask Allaah to forgive them or to respond to their need. This was done during the Prophet's lifetime but after his death his companions stopped doing this, and instead, they went to his uncle.

One might argue that prophets are alive in their graves, and therefore can respond to calls for intercession. The answer to this is that we have on record that: "... neither the Prophet (ﷺ) nor any of the prophets before him prescribed that the people should supplicate to the angels, the prophets, or the

[87] *Intercession.*

pious, nor that they should ask them to intercede for them, neither after their death, nor when they were absent," as explained by the scholar Ibn Taymiyah.

Bid'ah through celebrations:

Other innovations, which have crept into the practices of Muslims, include the celebration of the Prophet's birthday or the day of Hijrah[88]. Celebrating these events has no place in the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) or in the religion of Islaam. Neither the Prophet (ﷺ) nor his companions celebrated these days. Celebrating the Prophet's birthday is in fact: "... due to imitating the Christians in their celebrating Jesus' birthday or due to a claimed love for the Prophet (ﷺ). These are the reasons behind it. To celebrate the Prophet's birthday, even when many scholars dispute the date, is an innovated act the Salaf[89] did not do. If this were a good act, then the Salaf would have done it before us," as explained by the scholar Ibn Taymiyah.

Two celebrations have been prescribed for the Muslim nation, namely, Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adh-ha[90]. Anas said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) came to Madinah and the people of Madinah had, before Islaam, two days for play and amusement. So the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'I came to you and you had in Jahileeyah two days for play and amusement. Indeed Allaah has replaced them for you by that which is better than them: The day of Al-Adh-ha and the day of Fitr.[91]'" Any religious celebration, other than these two, is innovation and has no part in this religion.

These innovations have no part in the religion but are a result of going to extremes in giving the Prophet (ﷺ) his rights. Certainly, the Prophet (ﷺ) has a high position of honor among us. But to deviate by adopting practices that go against his teachings is not an expression of love and respect, but rather an expression of disobedience that instead of giving the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) his rights, denies them to him.

A middle-of-the-road approach is what Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) taught us as Muslims, and this is precisely what we are asked to practice when we give the Prophet (ﷺ) his rights.

[88] *The Prophet's flight from Makkah to Madinah.*

[89] *Muslims from the first centuries after Islaam.*

[90] *The feast of breaking fast after Ramadhaan and the feast of sacrifice following the Hajj day.*

[91] *Narrated in the book of Ahmad.*



He is: "Muhammad, son of Abdullah, son of Abd Al-Muttalib, son of Haashem, son of Abd Manaf, son of Qussai, son of Kelaab, son of Murrah."

Jasim Al-Mutawwa condenses the biography of the Prophet (ﷺ) into few pages and focuses on how he was perceived by his companions. He insists that: "Muslims must always check and verify that their belief in the Prophet (ﷺ), their following of his Sunnah, and their love for him are alive and strong in their lives."

This is something we need to check and verify continuously.

Know Thy Prophet

An essential part of being a Muslim is the attainment of love for Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). No one can truly claim to be a Muslim without it. Allaah, the Most High, tells us about that in the Qur'an: "Indeed, We have sent you as witness and a bringer of good tidings, and a warner. So that you (people) may believe in Allaah and His Messenger and honor him and respect him [i.e., the Prophet (ﷺ)], and exalt Him [i.e., Allaah] morning and late afternoon." [48:8-9]

This love, respect and glorification are his rights upon every Muslim, were due to him during life and remain so even after his death. There are literally hundreds of Qur'anic verses and Hadith that explain how Muslims are to observe these rights. The rights fall into three categories: believing him, following him and loving him. Allaah says: "But no, by your Lord, they will not (truly) believe until they make you [O Muhammad] judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find with themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission. [4:65]

Abdullah ibn Hishaam narrated that once: "We were with the Prophet (ﷺ) and he was holding the hand of Umar ibn Al-Khattaab when Umar said to him: 'O Allaah's Messenger 'You are dearer to me than everything except my own self.' Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) then said: 'No, by Him in Whose Hand my soul is, you will not have complete Faith until I am dearer to you than your own self.' Hearing that, Umar said: 'Now, by Allaah, you are dearer to me than my own self.' He (ﷺ) then said: "Now, O Umar, [i.e., now you are a believer].[92]'"

[92] *Narrated in the book of Al-Bukhari.*

Muslims must always check and verify that their belief in the Prophet (ﷺ), their following of his Sunnah, and their love for him (ﷺ) are alive and strong in their lives. Getting to know our beloved Prophet (ﷺ) well, is key to rekindling the fire of belief, obedience and love. We hope that the following summary of the Prophet (ﷺ), who he was and what he accomplished, will help us achieve that.

His Lineage

Muhammad son of Abdullah, son of Abd Al-Muttalib, son of Haashem, son of Abd Manaf, son of Qussai, son of Kelaab, son of Murrah. Muhammad's mother is Aamenah, daughter of Wahab, son of Abd Manaf, son of Zuhrah, son of Kelaab, son of Murrah.

His Conception

Aamenah used to say that she had never felt she was pregnant, nor suffer because of the embryo's weight, as other women did. She said the only thing that alerted her to the fact that she was pregnant was "that I missed my period."

His Birth

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) was born on Monday, 10 Rabi' 1st, 570 C.E.

His Midwife

The midwife who assisted in his birth was Ash-Shaffaa' Um Abdurrahman ibn Auf.

His Names

- Muhammad and Ahmad
- Al-Maahi (The Obliterator - for disbelief is obliterated by him)
- Al-Haasher (The Congregator - as he is resurrected at the head of the Resurrection Day congregation)
- Al-Aaqeb (the Successor, being the last prophet)
- Al-Muqaffa (Has the same meaning as Al-Aaqeb)

- Prophet of Mercy, Prophet of Repentance, and Prophet of Epics
- Ash-Shahid (The Witness)
- Al-Mubash-sher (Bringer of Good Omens)
- An-Natheer (The Warner)
- Ad-Dhahook (The Often-Smiling)
- Al-Mutawakkil (One who Completely Relies on Allaah)
- Al-Faateh (The Conqueror)
- Al-Ameen (The Truthful, The Trustworthy)
- Al-Khaatam (The Last Prophet)
- Al-Mustafa (The Chosen One)
- Ar-Rasool (The Messenger)
- An-Nabi (The Prophet)
- Al-Ummi (the Unlettered One)
- Al-Qusum (the Giver of Charity)

His Wet Nurses

The first to nurse him was his mother, who only did so for few days. After that came Thwaybah[93], who also gave her milk to her baby son Masrooh. This was for the few days before the arrival of Haleemah As-Sa'diyah[94]. When Haleemah arrived, she took him to her tribal home in the desert where he spent his early childhood years in the dwellings of Bani Sa'ad[95].

His Father's Death

His father Abdullah left Makkah with a group of Quraysh[96] men on a trading trip to Syria. On their way back they stopped in Madinah (then Yathrib), and he fell sick. He told the group he would stay behind with his [maternal] uncles, sons of Uddai ibn An-Najjar. During his stay in Madinah he died; he was 25 years old. His legacy was five camels and a share in some sheep. Allaah's Messenger inherited it. Um Ayman, whose maiden name was Barakah, was his nanny at the time.

[93] *A female slave who was emancipated by her owner, Abu Lahab, upon learning of the birth of his nephew Muhammad (ﷺ).*

[94] *A professional wet nurse, who nursed the Prophet (ﷺ) for several years.*

[95] *Haleemah's tribe.*

[96] *The Prophet's tribe.*

His Mother's Death

When he was six years old, his mother took him to Madinah to visit his uncles of the Najjar family. Um Ayman, his nanny, was with them to take care of him. Aaminah stayed in Madinah for a month and went back. She died on the way at Al-Abwaa. At the time of Al-Hudaybiyah, Allaah's Messenger said: "Allaah has given Muhammad leave to visit his mother's grave.[97]" He went to it, repaired it, and cried. Muslims accompanying him cried when they saw him cry. They talked to him about it, and he said: "I was overcome with feelings of mercy for her, and I cried.[98]"

[97] *Muslims at that stage were not permitted to visit the dead.*

[98] *This story is narrated by Abu Hurayrah in the Book of Muslim.*

His Physical Description

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) was of medium height, neither tall nor short. He was neither dark-skinned nor extremely fair. He had wavy hair, neither straight nor curly, and his hair touched his shoulders. Anas said: "I have never touched any silk that was smoother than the hand of Allaah's Messenger.[99]" His mouth was broad, and the slits of his eyes were long. His face was round, of a reddish fair complexion. His eyes were dark black. His fingers were thick, his forehead wide, his beard coarse, his cheeks flat, his chest broad, his arms and shoulders hairy, and his forearms long.

[99] *Narrated in the book of Ahmad.*

His Children

His eldest was a boy named Al-Qassim, followed another boy named Abdullah, and four girls, Zainab, Ruqayyah, Um Kulthoom, and Fatimah. These were all children of Khadeejah, his first wife. Al-Qassim and Abdullah both died as children. He had another son, Ibrahim, with Maria the Copt, but he died when he was 16 months old.

Some of His Miracles

• The Qur'an

- The Night Journey from Makkah to Jerusalem and the subsequent Ascension to the Heavens
- The yearning of the palm tree trunk, which he used it as a pulpit, to him (ﷺ) when he moved to a new pulpit
- Water bursting out from between his fingers to quench the thirst of the believers
- Having knowledge of metaphysical things, which Allaah has given him
- Being greeted by rocks and trees as the Messenger of Allaah
- Knowledge of future events, as informed by Allaah
- The splitting of the moon as a sign for Quraysh
- Food and drink multiply through his blessing
- His treatment of Companions' ailments by Dua'a[100] and massaging the affected area
- His supplications being answered
- Angels fighting on his side, especially during the battle of Badr

[100] *Supplication.*

How Allaah Honored Him in This World

1. The last of the prophets:

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "An analogy of me and the prophets before me is that of a man who built a building, and did a very good job, and he decorated it, except for the location of one brick in one of the corners. People started to cycle around it, impressed by it, and say: 'Would you not put in that brick?'" The Messenger (ﷺ) added, "I am the brick, and I am the last of the prophets.[101]"

[101] *Narrated by Abu Hurayrah in the books of Al-Bukhari and Muslim.*

2. He has a better claim to all nations than their own Prophets:

"Indeed, the most worthy of Abraham among the people are those who followed him [in submission to Allaah] and this prophet [i.e., Muhammad (ﷺ)]." [3:68]

3. His wives are the mothers of believers:

Allaah says: "The Prophet is more worthy of the believers than themselves,

and his wives are [in the position of] their mothers." [33:6]

4. He is the best of all creatures:

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Allaah selected Kinaanah out of the offspring of Ishmael, selected Quraysh out of Kinaanah, and from Quraysh he selected the Haashim clan, and selected me from that clan.[102]" He added: "I am, without any boasting, the noblest of Adam's offspring.[103]"

[102] *Narrated by Waathilah ibn Al-Asqa'a in the book of Muslim.*

[103] *Part of Hadith narrated by Abu Bakr in the book of Ahmad.*

5. He is a mercy for all creatures:

Allaah's says: "And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds." [21:107]

6. The universal nature of his message:

Allaah says: "And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner." [34:28]

7. Allaah's promise to protect him:

Allaah says: "And Allaah will protect you from the people" [5:67], and "Indeed, We are sufficient for you against the mockers." [15:95]

8. Allaah's promise to protect his religion:

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [i.e., the Qur'an], and indeed, We will be its guardian." [15:9]

9. Prohibition of calling him by his first name and of raising one's Voice above his:

Allaah says: "Do not make [your] calling of the Messenger among yourselves as the call of one of you to another," [24:63] and, "do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet." [49:2]

10. Constant Dua'a for blessing to be upon him:

Allaah says: "Indeed, Allaah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allaah to confer] blessings upon him and ask [Allaah to grant him] peace." [33:56]

11. The Night Journey from Makkah to Jerusalem and the Ascension to the Heavens:

This was an occasion on which he received the honor of being addressed directly by Allaah, seeing Paradise and Hellfire, hearing the squeak of pens (recording Allaah's decrees), and leading the prophets in Salaah in Jerusalem. Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "I saw myself in a group of prophets…It was Salaah time, and I led them . . .[104]"

[104] *Part of Hadith narrated by Anas ibn Maalik in the book of An-Nasaa'i.*

12. He was forgiven his sins:

Allaah says: "Indeed, We have given you [O Muhammad], a clear conquest that Allaah may forgive for you what preceded of your sin [i.e., errors] and what will follow." [48:1-2]

13. Postponing his accepted Dua'a:

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "I have kept my Dua'a to use them as an intercession for my nation on the Day of Resurrection.[105]"

[105] *Narrated by Anas ibn Maalik in the book of Muslim.*

14. His mate of Jinn[106] embracing Islaam:

[106] *Shaitaan or creatures hidden from our view.*

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Every single one of you has a partner from the Jinn associated with them." He was asked, "Even you, O Allaah's Messenger?" He replied: "Even me, but Allaah has helped me against him and he has embraced Islaam. Therefore, he bids me to do only good things.[107]"

[107] *Narrated by Abdullah ibn Mas'oud in the book of Muslim.*

15. His century was the best of all centuries:

Allaah's Messenger said "I was sent to the best of human centuries, taken one age after another . . .[108]"

[108] *Narrated by Imaraan ibn Husayn in the book of Al-Bukhari.*

16. A portion of Paradise lies between his house and his pulpit:

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Between my house and my pulpit is one of the gardens of Paradise, and my pulpit is on my flowerbed.[109]"

[109] *Narrated by Abu Hurayrah in the books of Al-Bukhari and Muslim.*

17. To see him in a dream is to truly see him:

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Whenever someone sees me in a dream, he has actually seen me.[110]"

[110] *Narrated by Anas ibn Maalik in the books of Al-Bukhari and Muslim.*

18. The seal of prophethood between his shoulders:

Jaabir is quoted as saying: "I saw a seal on the back of Allaah's Messenger which looked like the egg of a pigeon.[111]"

[111] *Narrated in the book of Muslim.*

19. A myriad of special gifts from Allaah:

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "I am given the gift of perfect oration. I win victory by fright. Spoils of ware are allowed to me [when it has not been for earlier Prophets]. The earth is made for me a place to prostrate and to be purified [meaning to perform Salaah anywhere]. I am given the keys of the earth's treasures. While I was asleep, the keys of the earth's treasures were brought and placed in my hand.[112]" Abu Hurairah commented: "Allaah's Messenger is gone now, so you are going to pick them up."

[112] *Narrated by Abu Hurayrah in the books of Al-Bukhari and Muslim.*

20. Knowledge of the metaphysical:

Umar ibn Al-Khattab said: "The Prophet stood up before us and told us about the beginning of creation and on until the people of Paradise get into their dwellings and the people of Hellfire get into their dwellings. Some people remember his words, and others have forgotten.[113]"

[113] *Narrated in the book of Al-Bukhari.*

How Allaah Will Honor Him in the Hereafter

1. The first to be resurrected and the first to intercede:

Referring to himself, Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "...And the first to have his grave open... and the first to intercede and the first to be asked to intercede.[114]"

[114] *Narrated by Abu Hurayrah in the book of Muslim.*

2. Prophets walk under his banner:

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "There is nobody who is not under my banner on the Day of Resurrection, waiting for relief. I carry the banner of Praising Allaah. I walk and people walk with me until I get to the gate of Paradise...[115]"

[115] *Narrated by Abu Sa'id in the book of Al-Haakim.*

3. The first to walk across the [path overhanging Hellfire] Seraat:

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "So I will be the first to cross with his nation.[116]"

[116] *Part of Hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah in the book of Al-Bukhari.*

4. The first to enter Paradise:

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "... I am also the first to knock on the gate of Paradise.[117]" He (ﷺ) also said: "I come to the gate of Paradise on the Day of Resurrection, and I ask for it to be opened. The keeper asks: 'Who are you?' 'Muhammad' I say. He says: 'You are the one I am ordered to open for, and not anybody before you.[118]'"

[117] *Part of Hadith narrated by Anas ibn Maalik in the book of Muslim.*

[118] *Narrated by Anas ibn Maalik in the book of Muslim.*

5. Being the prophet with the most followers:

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "I am the prophet with the largest number of followers on the Day of Resurrection.[119]"

[119] *Part of Hadith narrated by Anas ibn Maalik in the book of Muslim.*

6. Being given Al-Kawthar[120]:

[120] *A river in Paradise.*

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "While I was walking in Paradise, I came to a river the banks of which are domes of hollow pearls. I asked: 'What is this Gabriel?' He said: 'This is the Al-Kawthar, which your Lord has given to

you.[121]'"

7. Being given the highest rank, virtue, and commended position:

This is established in a well-known Hadith[122], and is the supplication made upon hearing Athaan.

8. Being given the right for intercession:

He (ﷺ) intercedes for people with major or minor offenses, for people to be admitted into Paradise, and for the waiting people to have their account sped up[123].

[121] *Narrated by Anas ibn Maalik in the book of Al Bukhari*

[122] *Narrated by Jaabir ibn Abdullah in the book of Al Bukhari.*

[123] *Narrated by Anas ibn Maalik in the book of Al-Bukhari.*

Allaah's Praise and Commendation of Him

1. One of us [the Muslims]:

Allaah says: "We have sent among you a messenger from yourselves." [2:151] Ali ibn Abi Taalib explained that what is meant by "one of you" is "by kinship, marital ties, and noble descent.

2. Mercy:

"And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to all the worlds." [21:107] Allaah embellished Muhammad (ﷺ) with mercy, so he was himself a mercy and all his traits are mercy to people. Anybody who is blessed, even with some of his mercy, is saved. His life was a mercy, and so was his death, meaning that it was a mercy to Jinn, human beings, and all other creatures.

3. A witness and a bringer of good tidings and warnings:

"O Prophet, indeed We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner." [33:45] He is a witness for or against people on the Day of Resurrection. He is also a witness that Allaah is the One and Only Deity. Allaah has not made him a pretender. The Prophet (ﷺ) brings good tidings of turning to Allaah and receiving what He has sent, and to those who fail to

respond, he brings a warning. But he does not stop at good tidings and warnings; he then calls these people to Allaah. He is described as: "and one who invites to Allaah." [33:46]

4. Shining lantern:

"And one who invites to Allaah, by His permission, and an illuminating lamp." [33:46] From a lantern, many lights can be derived. If they turn off, the original remains. Every companion received something of the Prophet's light of guidance.

5. Exalting his fame:

"And We raised high for you your repute." [94:4] Ibn Abbas pointed out that the Prophet (ﷺ): "was mentioned along with Allaah in the Athaan, Iqaamah[124], and the Tashahhud; on Fridays from pulpits; of the days of Al-Fitr and Al-Adhha, and the three days follow; the day of Arafaat[125]; at the stone-throwing sites during Hajj; on Safa and Marwah[126]; in the marriage speech; and everywhere on earth.

If a man worships Allaah but fails to testify that Muhammad (ﷺ) is Allaah's Messenger, his worship counts for nothing. The Prophet's fame is exalted among angels in Heaven and among men on Earth. The commended position and the noble ranks he is given will also exalt his fame in the Hereafter.

[124] The call to perform Salaah.

[125] The fundamental day of Hajj.

[126] Two hills, currently in the Holy Mosque in Makkah, between which Hagar, mother of Ishmael ran in search for water for him when he was a baby.

Some of His Characters

1. Forbearance:

It is said that when one of the Prophet's teeth was broken and his head was fractured on the day of Uhud, his Companions took it hard on themselves and said: "If you only pray Allaah to punish them." He said: "I was not sent to be a cursing man, but rather a promoter and a mercy. Allaah, please guide my people, for they do not know.[127]"

[127] Narrated by Abu Hurayrah in the book of Muslim.

2. Generosity:

Ibn Abbaas narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) was: "the most generous person, even more generous than the strong uncontrollable wind (in readiness and haste to do charitable deeds).[128]"

[128] *Narrated in the book of Al-Bukhari.*

3. Mercy and kindness:

After the liberation of Makkah, the Prophet (ﷺ) said to his former persecutors: "What do you think I will do to you?" They answered: "You will only do something favorable; you are a kind and generous brother and a kind and generous nephew!" The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Go – you are free to do as you wish.[129]"

[129] *Narrated in the book of Al-Bayhaqi.*

4. Faithfulness:

When a gift was given to the Prophet (ﷺ) he used to say, "Take it to the house of so-and so; she was Khadeejah's[130] friend and loved her.[131]"

[130] *The Prophet's first wife.*

[131] *Narrated in the book of Al-Haakem.*

5. Modesty:

In his household, he shared the housework with his family members. He cleaned his gowns himself, milked his sheep, patched his clothes, mended his shoes, took care of himself, swept the house, tied and fed camels, ate with the servant and helped her to knead, and carried his shopping home from the marketplace. He was given the choice between being a king prophet and a servant-to-Allaah prophet and chose the latter.

Examples of His Humor

1. With his wives:

Aisha said: "I brought some soup which I had cooked, and told Sawdah[132], with the Prophet (ﷺ) sitting between her and me: 'Have some!' but she declined. I said: 'You either eat or I smear your face.' She would not eat, so I took some soup from the bowl and smeared her face. Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) laughed and lifted his feet off the floor. He said to Sawdah: 'Smear her

[132] *The second of the Prophet's wives.*

face!' So she took some from the bowl and smeared my face, and Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) kept laughing.[133]"

[133] *Narrated in the book of An-Nasaa'i.*

2. With a woman:

A woman called Um Ayman came to Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) and said: "My husband invites you." He (ﷺ) asked: "Who is he? The man with some white in his eye?" She said: "Oh, Allaah's Messenger, by Allaah he has no white in his eye.[134]" He was joking with her, for every man has part of his eyes white.

[134] *Narrated in the book of Ash-Shifaa by Al-Qadhi Eyaadh.*

3. With children:

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) used to lift with his feet his grandson Al-Hussein ibn Ali and chant a child rhyme for him. He also used to stick his tongue out for his grand son Al-Hassan ibn Ali, who would cheer up upon seeing it.

4. With one of his companions:

Anas said that Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) once held one of his Companions from the back, and the man said: "Let go! Who is it?" He turned back and recognized Allaah's Messenger, so he kept rubbing himself against him. Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) kept saying, "Who would buy this slave?" The man said: "O Allaah's Messenger, you will find me unmarketable." Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "For Allaah, you are not.[135]"

[135] *Narrated in the book of Ahmad.*

Belief in Him and the Reward of Loving Him

1. Belief in him:

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "I am ordered to fight people until they testify that there is no God but Allaah and believe in me and in what I have brought. If they do, their blood and property are safe from me, except in justified cases, and they have to present their account to Allaah.[136]"

[136] *Narrated by Abu Hurayrah in the book of Al-Bukhari.*

2. Obeying him is an obligation:

Allaah says: "O you who have believed, obey Allaah and His Messenger,"

[8:20] and: "The Day their faces will be turned about in the Fire, they will say, 'How we wish we had obeyed Allaah and obeyed the Messenger.'" [33:66]

3. Loving him is a requirement:

Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "None of you believes truly unless I am for him dearer than his offspring, parents, and all other people.[137]" He also said: "Three qualities will allow everybody that has them to taste the sweetness of faith." The first of the qualities he mentions is to "hold Allaah and His Messenger dearer to him than other people...[138]"

[137] *Narrated by Anas ibn Maalik in the book of Ahmad.*

[138] *Narrated by Anas ibn Maalik in the book of Al-Bukhari.*

4. The reward for loving him:

While they were together, a person kept looking at the Prophet (ﷺ) without even blinking his eyes. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him: "What is it with you?" The man said: "You are dearer to me than my own parents, and I am enjoying looking at you, because when the Day of Resurrection comes, Allaah will raise you up as His favorite." In reference to this, Allaah revealed the verse that says: "And whoever obeys Allaah and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allaah has bestowed favor of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs, and the righteous people. And excellent are those as companions." [4:69]

5. The case of a woman of Ansaar[139]:

A woman of Ansaar lost her father, brother, and husband on the day of the Uhud battle. She asked, however, "How is Allaah's Messenger." She was told, "He is all right." She said: "Show me where he is so I can see him." When she did see him she said: "When you are safe, every calamity is a trifling."

[139] *Title bestowed on the Muslims of Madinah for supporting the Prophet (ﷺ) and literally means 'supporters'.*

The Companions' Followers and Their Love for Him

1. Imam At-Tajeebi:

Abu Ibrahim At-Tajeebi said: "When a Muslim remembers the Prophet (ﷺ) or hears somebody mention the Prophet (ﷺ) to him, he should submit and feel awe and respect. He should calm down in motion and assume the awe and veneration he would feel had he been actually in front of him. He should

behave in the manner taught to us by Allaah."

2. Imam Ibn Mahdi:

Whenever Abd Al-Rahman ibn Mahdi read one of the Prophet's Hadith, he used to order the people with him to quiet down, quoting the verse that says: "Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet." [49:2]. He said that one should listen when Hadith is read the same way people listened when the Prophet (ﷺ) himself talked to them.

3. Imam Maalik:

Imam Maalik said: "I love to honor the Hadith of Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) and to quote them only when I am clean. I hate to quote him on the road, while I am standing, or when I am in a hurry. I also like to understand his Hadith well."

Signs of Decorum and Love

- Following his example, abiding by his commands, and imitating his actions, whether in optional or obligatory activities
- Frequently remembering and mentioning him and yearning to meet him
- Glorifying and venerating him when he is mentioned and displaying submission and humility upon hearing his name
- Feeling love towards his family members and companions whom he loved and enmity towards people he looked at as foes
- Loving the Qur'an that was revealed to him using it as a guide, and following the conduct it recommends
- Feeling mercy towards his followers, being truthful with them, serving their best interest, and removing anything that may harm them

Praying for Peace and Blessing for Him

1. The meaning:

The literal meaning of the Arabic term As-Salatu Alar-Rasool is ‘prayer upon the Messenger’

When attributed to Allaah it means Allaah’s mercy, satisfaction, and praise of the Messenger before the angels.

When applied to angels, it means praying and asking mercy for him.

When applied to Muslims in general, it means venerating him, in addition to praying and asking mercy for him.

2. The form:

We use the best form during the conclusion of Salaat: “O Allaah, send blessing and peace to Muhammad and his kin, the same way you blessed Ibrahim and his kin. You are Praiseworthy and Glorious.”

There are many others, but the shortest acceptable form is: “O Allaah, send blessing and peace to Muhammad.”

3. Appropriate timing:

On Fridays and the nights before them, in the morning and the evening, when entering or leaving a mosque, when visiting the Prophet’s tomb, when responding to Athaan, in supplications and at their conclusion, while walking between Safa and Marwah, whenever his name is mentioned, when one turns his face towards the Black Stone of Al-Ka’bah, when one wakes up, when a reading of the whole Qur’an is completed, in hardships and anxiety, when asking Allaah for mercy, when teaching people something, when preaching and giving lessons, when a man proposes marriage to a woman, and on every other occasion on which Allaah’s Name is invoked

4. The rewards for praying for the Prophet (ﷺ):

A. Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “When a person prays for me once, Allaah

prays for him ten times, cancels ten of his offenses, and grants him ten [heavenly] rewards.[140]"

B. Ibn Masoud said Allaah's Messenger, (ﷺ) said: "The people considered most faithful to me on the Day of Resurrection are the ones who have prayed for me the most.[141]"

C. Ubai ibn Ka'b said to the Prophet (ﷺ) once: "O Allaah's Messenger, I pray for you a lot, so how much of my prayers should I devote to you?" "As you wish," he (ﷺ) said. Ubai asked: "A quarter?" "As you wish," the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "and it will be better to make it more." Ubai asked again: "A third?" "As you wish," the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "and it will be better to make it more." Ubai asked, "How about a half?" "As you wish," the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "and it will be better to make it more." Ubai suggested, "Three quarter?" "As you wish," the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "and it will be better to make it more." Ubai said: "Then I will devote all my prayers for you." The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Then all your offenses will be forgiven.[142]"

[140] *Narrated by Anas ibn Maalik in the book of Ahmad.*

[141] *Narrated in the book of At-Tirmithi .*

[142] *Narrated in the book of Ahmad.*

TO TAKE A

By Ibrahim Babelli

“Why do Muslims overreact when their Prophet (ﷺ) is insulted or belittled?”

This question is often asked in non-Muslim circles whenever Muslims react angrily to any negative portrayal of the Prophet (ﷺ). Many of us who lived or studied in non-Muslim countries were faced with this question.

In his article, Ibrahim Babelli claims that: “no offense is trivial in the eyes of Muslims when it is directed against Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).” And to protect the sanctity of the Prophet (ﷺ), Babelli claims that any Muslim would willingly: “... take a bullet for him.”

To Take a Bullet for Him

Back in 1993, when I was sharing an apartment with John during the school year, he suggested that I see the newly released movie "Dave" starring Kevin Kline and Sigourney Weaver. The storyline of the movie was about the affable owner of an employment agency who had an uncanny resemblance to the U.S. President. He found himself forced to replace the real President in an attempt by the White House staff to avoid a potentially explosive scandal.

I found the movie slightly amusing, but there was one scene, actually two, that I always remember. Dave, the imposter in the movie, had the following conversation with Duane, the secret service agent:

Dave: You know, I've always wondered about you guys. You know, about how you're trained to take a bullet for the president?
Duane: What about it?
Dave: Is that really true? I mean, would you let yourself be killed to save his life?
Duane: Certainly.
Dave: So, now that means you'd get killed for me too.

Duane did not answer this question immediately, but it was so obvious that he felt its heaviness. Later on towards the end of the movie when Duane discovered the real character of Dave he finally answered the question: "I would have taken a bullet for you."

I wondered then whom I would take a bullet for. Several years later, I was having coffee in the office of my colleague and good friend Rumaih, and we discussed this same question: Whom would we take a bullet for? We both agreed that this person must be someone whom we hold dear, whose life we regard as more important than our own lives, and for whom we would sacrifice anything, including our own lives. Our fathers were identified as ones for whom we would take bullets, for example. But I would not take a bullet for Rumaih's father and he would not take a bullet for my father.

When several of my non-Muslim colleagues did not understand why Muslims become so angry when the Prophet (ﷺ) is ridiculed, insulted or belittled, and why they go so far as to sacrifice their own lives, I immediately remembered what Duane said to Dave at the end of the movie: "I would have taken a bullet for you."

Muslims are taking bullets for the Prophet (ﷺ). That was my answer.

Umar ibn Al-Khattaab told the Prophet (ﷺ) once: "O Allaah's Apostle! You are dearer to me than everything except my own self." The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "No, by Him in Whose Hand my soul is, (you will not have complete faith) till I am dearer to you than your own self." Then Umar said to him [having reflected upon the matter]: "However, now, by Allaah, you are dearer to me than my own self." The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Now, O Umar, (now you are a believer)."

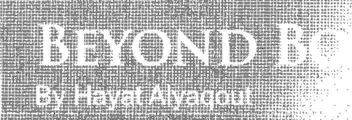
I cannot be absolutely certain of the exact mental arguments that Umar entertained before he gave his final answer, but I am almost sure that he asked himself the following question: "Would I sacrifice myself to save the Prophet (ﷺ)?" And his entire self, mind and soul, answered emphatically: "YES".

The companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) held him dear to themselves, to the point that they would rather suffer the most horrible deaths than wish upon the Prophet (ﷺ) the slightest pain. When Khubayb, a companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) was captured and was about to be executed, his executioners asked him: "Would you want Muhammad to be in your place?" He answered them: "I would suffer being hacked to death to spare the Prophet (ﷺ) a thorn prick in his home." He, Khubayb, was indeed hacked to death, but did not waver in his love for the Prophet (ﷺ).

Muslims may differ on a lot of things, but they all agree on one thing, and that is their absolute and unwavering love of the Prophet (ﷺ). Muslims cannot take a bullet for the Prophet (ﷺ) now, since no bullet can hit him physically in his grave, but they would take bullets for his sake any time to protect his sanctity from anything that might tarnish it.

Is this an extreme reaction to a trivial offence? After all, derogatory and outright offensive stereotypes are commonplace these days. But nobody reacts the same way Muslims do when their Prophet (ﷺ) is offensively portrayed in the media. The reason is that no offense is trivial in the eyes of Muslims when it is directed against Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Muslims would take bullets willingly to protect the sanctity of the Prophet (ﷺ) for his sanctity is much more valuable to them than the life of the U.S. President is to his secret service agents.

I would take a bullet for him.





Yes. Muslims would undoubtedly take a bullet for the Prophet (ﷺ). But keeping on taking bullets for him does not stop the bullets from being fired.

Here is a proposal on how to deal with the aftermath of the cartoons controversy. In her article, Hayat Alyaqout suggests that we might be the ones to blame in stating: “Islaam is a great message, but its case is in the hands of bad lawyers; us, that is.” She goes on to say: “We need to use our senses, enough with sensibility.”

We could not agree more.

Beyond Boycott

The domino effect is spreading, beginning with Denmark, passing by Norway, stopping briefly in France, and finding its way to other countries that are expected to be infected with the "cartoons" virus.

I cannot conceal my delight that almost every Muslim is enthusiastically taking part in the boycott campaigns, nor can I conceal my fear that a feeling of victory and sufficiency will engulf us and make us think that we did what we had to do, and this is the end of the story. We are not boycotting countries in which elements of the media printed or reprinted the offensive cartoons because we want to undermine their economy. No, it is not about revenge. It is mainly due to the lack of mass-media-based resources available to Muslims that boycott has become our means to attract the attention of people in those countries in order to convey a message to them: What you did was wrong; we are boycotting you because we have been hurt. We are not doing this to rejoice over diminishing sales of, say, Danish dairy products, and if we ever think that this is why we are boycotting, then we must be completely deluded.

Boycott campaigns might prevent many other publications from republishing the cartoons, and might even lead the publications that already published them to apologize. However, that would be a lame apology; an apology to curtail our anger and its consequences, an apology that stems out of intimidation not out of respect and understanding. This is not our mission as Muslims: Our mission is to enlighten people, not to bulldoze them.

Boycott should be merely a launching pad to a long-term far-reaching campaign to inform and enlighten people about Muhammad (ﷺ). What happened was a symptom of lack of knowledge. Why blame them for defaming a person they do not know? Knowledge is a legitimate human right, so why have we relinquished our role in telling other people about this great man?

Painkillers will not undo this; a long-term cognitive therapy is needed here. The only "copy" of Islaam the West knows is a pirated and illegal copy, the copy disseminated either by alleged terrorists or wealthy womanizers and

the likes. Again, how can we blame them for sneeringly defaming what they perceive as the prophet of terrorism? I am afraid that we are being unfair to Westerners in this. Islaam is a great message, but its case is in the hands of bad lawyers; us, that is. Deep in my heart, I feel that we might be held accountable on the Day of Judgment for what happened, not the Danish cartoonist! He did what he did because he did not know about our Prophet (ﷺ) and we – thanks to our passiveness and irrationality – are the reason other people around the globe don't know about the Prophet (ﷺ).

The good news is that even though we stumbled and fell, we have fallen standing, and we should either use this opportunity or lose it. What I mean is that the character at the center of this controversy, the Prophet (ﷺ) was a person of impeccable manners; even his worst foes acknowledged his greatness. So what better chance to introduce the real message of Islaam than by telling other people about the Prophet (ﷺ)? Had the cartoons been about our mistakes with which we tarnish Islaam, I daresay we would have mutedly withdrawn within our shells.

An agenda should be formulated to tell the world about the Prophet (ﷺ). Let us not indulge ourselves in the widespread naïve presumption that a boycott will force them to inquire and search to discover who this great man was. The lack of even-handed material on Islaam is appalling, and if we leave it to their personal quests, it will backfire in our faces. Our agenda should include various media-based tools that are rational, even-handed, and professionally produced. We should speak the language of the West in addressing the West. We need to use our senses, enough with sensibility.

When the Prophet (ﷺ) climbed some forty kilometers on foot to visit Taif (a mountainous resort to the east of Makkah) to present the message of Islaam to its people, they refused to listen and stoned him to force him out of their city. When he despondently left Taif, he was so bruised from the walk and the harsh treatment that his feet were bleeding. When the archangel Gabriel descended accompanied by the custodian angel of mountains, Gabriel told the Prophet (ﷺ) that Allaah had given him, Muhammad (ﷺ), the option of punishing the people of Taif by squashing them in between the mountains that

surround their city. The Prophet (ﷺ) declined the offer in the hope that some of their offspring would worship Allaah one day.

The angel carried down Divine empowerment that gave the Prophet (ﷺ) the ability to take revenge, but he opted for compassion, not revenge. This is a lesson in compassion that we all need to learn. The stoners of Taif were much worse than the perpetrators of the defaming cartoons. The stoners refused to listen; yet their offspring are now Muslims. Westerners have had no one to convey compassionately the message of Islaam to them and, if necessary, be patient if they choose to stone him/her, in the hope that their offspring might listen to the message.

Let us imitate the Prophet (ﷺ).



"No one should insult Prophets Muhammad, Jesus, or Moses, sallallaahu alayhem wa sallam, under the guise of free speech." Ekram Haque argues poignantly. He, however, continues to add that: "We can turn these negative, malicious cartoons into something positive by learning about the Prophet (ﷺ), by following him, and telling others about his teachings."

To correct stereotypes and negative portrayal of the Prophet (ﷺ), what Muslims need to engage in, according to Haque, is mainly: "... teaching the world what the Prophet (ﷺ) means to us and what his life was like."

A speaker, however, needs an audience. If no body listens then it matters not what is being said. Haque stresses that at first: "As for the West, there really is a need to re-examine the notion of free speech. Without safeguards, the exercise of this freedom can be lethal, as we have seen."

Safeguarding free speech necessitates listening, communicating, and learning.

We do believe that the audience is eager to listen.

Loving Him is Following Him

Muslims all over the world are deeply hurt by the recent caricatures of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in Danish and several other publications.

Every now and then, some Western media outlets provoke Muslims by insulting the Prophet (ﷺ). The baiting often succeeds in eliciting Muslims' outrage and sporadic violence.

The latest incident started with a Danish newspaper's caricature portraying Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as a terrorist. To add insult to injury, Norwegian, French, German, Dutch and a few other newspapers reprinted the defamatory cartoons to "defend" —they claimed— the freedom of expression. The real issue is not freedom of expression. Free speech is not and was never meant to be absolute. There are laws in the West that ban certain kinds of speech, including those that incite anti-Semitism, racism and violence. Moreover, some countries have laws against blasphemy and defamation. To Muslims, banning blasphemy against Allaah and Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) has a higher priority.

For the European newspapers to reprint the offensive cartoons to show solidarity with their Danish counterpart seems akin to the plot the leaders of Quraysh had hatched to assassinate Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The masterminds figured that including representatives from major tribes of Makkah in the heinous plot would make it impossible for the Prophet's clan, Banu Hashim, to avenge. But Allaah willed that the Prophet (ﷺ) would migrate to Madinah unscathed while the plotters laid siege to his house.

The West often underestimates the Muslims' reverence for their beloved Prophet (ﷺ) and is, therefore, always startled by the fierce Islaamic reaction to an insult against him. Few in the West know that for Muslims loving their Prophet more than themselves is a matter of faith, not choice. Further, the depiction of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as a terrorist is a falsification of history.

He was considered Al-Ameen by his people even before he received the Prophethood. Once, when asked by some of his followers to invoke Allaah's

wrath on the enemies, he refused saying he had been sent as a mercy unto mankind. Objective Western intellectuals have acknowledged the superior character of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). In his "The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History," Michael H. Hart ranked Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) No. 1 because "He was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels."

Alphonse de Lamartine, renowned 19th Century French writer, had this to say about the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ): "As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than him?"

Unfortunately, some Muslims forget that loving their Prophet (ﷺ) means following him. Burning Danish embassies, as they did in Damascus and Beirut, to avenge the insult to the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is a complete disservice to him. Our violent reaction only plays into the hands of those who wish to reinforce the negative stereotypes about Muslims.

Do Muslims need reminding that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) forgave the people of Taif who had rejected his message of monotheism and pelted him with stones, bloodying him? Islaamic tradition has it that when Archangel Gabriel sought his permission to punish the perpetrators, the Prophet (ﷺ) instead prayed that some day the inhabitants of Taif would leave their idols and only worship Allaah. Within a few years they did.

Prophet Muhammad's servant, Anas, once noted his forgiving disposition and said: "I served the Prophet (ﷺ) for ten years, and he never said 'uff[143]' to me and never blamed me by saying, 'Why did you do so or why didn't you do so?[144]'"

Prophet Muhammad's archenemies hated his message and hurled malicious insults at him, to which he responded with forbearance. Years later when he returned as victor to Makkah, his city of birth that he was forced to leave; he asked its awed citizens: "What do you think I'm going to do to you." They said: "You are a noble brother, son of a noble brother; we expect only good from you." The Prophet (ﷺ) responded with a general amnesty.

[143] *A word indicating impatience and displeasure.*

[144] *Narrated in the books of Al-Bukhari and Muslim.*

Defending Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) requires allowing freedom and practicing compassion and forgiveness, like he did. In his lifetime he bore insults with magnanimity and devoted his time to spreading the message of Allaah. In fact, he never took revenge on anyone for a personal offence.

Can we really respect him by violent retaliation?

Muslims should turn this extremely painful incident into something positive, by teaching the world what the Prophet (ﷺ) means to us and what his life was like. As for the West, there really is a need to re-examine the notion of free speech.

Without safeguards, the exercise of this freedom can be lethal, as we have seen.

One may ask, is it morally defensible to provoke violence, cause death, and create a conflict of civilizations for one cartoonist's freedom of expression? The West already has laws to protect religious freedom, which Muslims and other peoples of faith admire. What it now needs to do is to protect this freedom from being trampled by unbridled free speech. No one should insult Prophets Muhammad, Jesus, or Moses, sallallaahu alayhem wa sallam, under the guise of free speech. We can turn these negative, malicious cartoons into something positive by learning about the Prophet (ﷺ) by following him, and telling others about his teachings. Allaah described the Prophet (ﷺ): "And indeed, you are of a great moral character." [68:4]

In another verse: "There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allaah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allaah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allaah often." [33:21]

By a divine decision, the status of Muhammad (ﷺ) was raised forever: "And raised high for you your repute." [94:4]

Muslims were commanded to keep their voices low in the presence of Muhammad (ﷺ) out of respect: "O you who have believed, do not raise your

voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not. Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allaah – they are the ones whose hearts Allaah has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and great reward." [49:2-3]

While other prophets were sent to their own people, Muhammad (ﷺ) was appointed as the messenger to all mankind. And such he was asked to declare: "Say, [O Muhammad], "O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allaah to you all, [from Him] to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth.'" [7:158]

On the Day of Judgment he will be the only messenger to intercede with Allaah to seek forgiveness for the wrongdoers. As blasphemous as the drawings are, we believe that behind all events there is Allaah's pre-decree and wisdom that mortal beings fully understand only in hindsight. In the end, this deeply hurtful incident may be seen as benefiting the image of the Prophet (ﷺ).

A case in point is the verse: "Indeed, We have given you, [O Muhammad], a clear conquest." [48:1] When this verse was revealed, even some of the most exemplary Muslims could not understand how being prevented from performing Hajj by enemies could be a manifest victory. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) had just signed a treaty with non-Muslims of Makkah that imposed, seemingly, unfair restrictions on Muslims.

The Prophet (ﷺ) swore by Allaah that no matter how restrictive this treaty seemed, it was a clear victory for Muslims. Within a few years, the victory became abundantly clear when Muslims marched into Makkah, not just as pilgrims but as victors.

Our love for the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) cannot be expressed except by following him. If we did follow him, we might see Allaah change this painful incident into a great opportunity for the Islaamic cause.

AFTERWORD

This book was intended to help us understand that, as Muslims, the only way we should react to acts of provocation against ourselves and our religion, is by following the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and striving to emulate his character and behavior. Yet, as so often happens just as a book is about to be published, events overtook it.

On September 30, 2005, the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten published cartoons depicting the Prophet of Islaam (ﷺ) as a terrorist and a womanizer. Danish Muslim organizations staged protests in response, and after their protests fell on deaf ears, the protests spread across the world, with individuals, organizations, and even governments protesting the cartoons' publication.

Muslims in their thousands sought ways to respond. Some wrote to the newspaper and others to the Danish Government to protest and to ask for an apology. Others organized demonstrations; demonstrations that unfortunately turned violent in some countries. But as the controversy grew, the cartoons were reprinted in more than fifty other countries, and the issue was represented as a battle between freedom of speech and religious intolerance.

For some Muslims, the publication of the offensive cartoons was a wake-up call. They began to be aware that the cartoons might actually reflect how the Prophet of Islaam (ﷺ) is perceived in the West, and that it is the duty of Muslims everywhere to correct the misconceptions.

This book then, by the Grace of Allah, is appearing at a crucial time. Its central message is that we must all come to know our Prophet (ﷺ), and to love him fully and unconditionally, and it is only by doing so that we will be able to correct the misunderstandings, wrong perceptions, and negative stereotypes about the Prophet of Islaam (ﷺ).

Know Thy Prophet (ﷺ) · Love Thy Prophet (ﷺ).

FEEDBACK

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